



WHAT IS CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY?

*John S. Marzillier and John Hall (Eds)
Oxford University Press (1987)
297 pages. Price £20.00 (h/b); £9.95 (p/b)*

Clinical psychologists now work in virtually all parts of Britain and this book provides a comprehensive overview of current practice. It is essentially a collection of chapters about the work of clinical psychologists in particular fields written by experienced practitioners. These areas include well-established ones such as work with adults, children and the mentally handicapped and rehabilitation, as well as newly emerging ones such as work with the elderly, physical health, physical handicap and primary care. The introductory chapter describes the history of the profession, the training and how clinical psychologists work, while the final one summarizes current trends. Each chapter is self-contained, but all are easily accessible to the non-specialist, with plenty of case examples and snippets of relevant research. References are kept to a minimum although suggestions for further reading are made. Jargon is largely avoided and a glossary defines key terms.

This book is undoubtedly the best description of contemporary British clinical psychology available. It will prove invaluable to those considering clinical psychology as a profession, but also can be dipped into. For example, the chapter on primary care would be of interest to many general practitioners, especially in view of recent government proposals for making it feasible for them to employ clinical psychologists directly.

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COMMUNITY CARE IN BRITAIN

*Variations on a theme
David Hunter and Gerald Wistow
King Edward's Hospital Fund, London (1987)
182 pages. Price £9.50*

The main theme of the book is policy-making. The authors compare the arrangements in Scotland, Wales and England, analyse policy intentions and outcomes and offer explanations for differences between the countries. The study focusses on policies for community care.

There are comparisons of current administrative arrangements for policy-making in the three countries and the development and implementation of community care policies in general, and for the mentally handicapped in particular. There is also a careful assessment of the evidence on the impact of joint planning and financial incentives on local collaboration. The conclusion points to limited but uneven development in all three countries and real differences in policy in spite of claims to policy uniformity.

The authors conclude that least progress has occurred in Scotland. Strong health professional interests and a 'hands-off' approach to policy-making among officials are two factors which have helped to produce a continuing *de facto* pre-eminence for

institutional care. Most progress in community care for the mentally handicapped has occurred in Wales. The authors point to a philosophy of normalization, helped by the involvement of non-health professionals and a committed Secretary of State. England may have seen more progress in other aspects of community care, where there has been considerable emphasis on joint planning.

The book is useful for those who wish to keep abreast of developments in community care. It provides a useful reminder of the continuing ability of health service personnel to 're-interpret' policy to suit their interests and objectives, whatever the local form of government.

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PROBLEMS IN DOCTOR/PATIENT ENCOUNTERS (Video)

*Royal Society of Medicine, London (1987)
Price £316.25 (complete series), £23.00 (introductory tape),
£42.55 (individual case studies), £103.50 (set of three)*

'Take note of the patient, and the patient is more likely to take note'. This may sound like reinventing the wheel but this is part of the 'new thinking' on the consultation. So too is the suggestion that doctors should try to provide 'reactive explanations' for diagnosis and advice, responding to and building on the patient's own ideas.

This new series of 11 VHS videos, an introductory tape and 10 individual case studies, is produced jointly by the Royal Society of Medicine and the University of Liverpool. The series sets out to provide a 'learning resource' by applying recent research findings to everyday general practice and to illustrate, by recorded interviews and consultations, the principles of the lay perspective and reactive explanations.

The introductory tape is rather ponderous and unnecessarily long-winded. However, the individual case studies provide a fascinating insight into the wide variety of different presentations and approaches possible for any one case. There are few cases where the answer is clear and straightforward and many that will provoke valuable discussion between health professionals in primary health care teams.

CLIVE FROGGATT
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SLEEP AND AGEING

*Kevin Morgan
Croom Helm, London (1987)
151 pages. Price £19.95*

James Mackenzie once wrote that for the intelligent practice of medicine the simplification of medicine is necessary. *Sleep and ageing* by Kevin Morgan simplifies without being simplistic and manages in the space of 150 pages to tell us all we need to know about this interesting subject, so important for general practi-

tioners with about 15% of their elderly population taking hypnotic drugs regularly.

The author is not a medical man but has carefully researched the two fields of sleep research and social gerontology. He starts well with a chapter on the history of sleep research and we are taken through age related changes, factors upsetting sleep in the elderly to the use of hypnotic drugs and possible alternatives. However, the chapter on dreams is superfluous and difficult to treat well in such a book. Drug dependence is recognized but no account given of how we can detect the patient likely to become dependent.

The book is well referenced and could be a good starting point for future researchers. Moreover, it is delightfully short and should not daunt even the busiest general practitioner, to whom it is quite definitely relevant.

ANTHONY D. CLIFT
General Practitioner, Manchester

WHY ARE WE WAITING?

An analysis of hospital waiting lists

John Yates

Oxford University Press (1987)

90 pages. Price £3.95

This is a slim paperback printed on poor paper which provides an easily readable and accessible account of waiting lists in the National Health Service, the nature of the problem and possible solutions. The author makes no secret of his political position which is against private practice: this is helpful and in no way diminishes his analysis. He was a member of the working party which produced the Duthie report and is well informed and has thought a lot about the problem. It is quite clear that solutions are political in the widest sense and unlikely to be implemented, at least in the short term.

Anyone, lay or medical, even peripherally interested in NHS waiting lists, would enjoy and benefit from reading this small book.

JAMES MCCORMICK
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HEALTH AND ILLNESS: THE LAY PERSPECTIVE

Michael Calnan

Tavistock Publications, London (1987)

198 pages. Price £7.95

Based on an original sociological study this book aims to illustrate the beliefs and behaviour that people in this country have about health and illness. Questions were asked, such as: 'How much do you value health compared to certain other things?', 'What does being healthy actually mean, in your experience?', 'How far do you feel that your health is in your own control?...your own responsibility?' and, since the study was also about illness, 'What does illness mean to you?', 'When would you decide to seek help?'

The gaps which can exist between how doctors think and how people in general think (or indeed doctors when they suffer illness themselves) are a topical focus of interest and concern. So too are the differences in the words used by professionals and other people to express such thoughts. There is therefore no doubt about the importance of this subject for doctors.

But was this book written for them? There is little to suggest that it was. Although it is inherently difficult to write about the nature of health and illness, there could have been more help for the ordinary reader in the form of timely signposts to the direction of the argument or in discarding words which may be familiar to sociologists but not to others.

For those who are prepared to make a sustained effort, *Health and illness: the lay perspective* contains valuable material, not

least in the transcripts of what people say about their own experience, beliefs and motives for action. There are, for example, differences in the statements of people whose lives have been less or more privileged and fortunate. There are, for another example, clues to suggest why prevention and health maintenance are resisted. The need to enter the other person's thinking, if you want them to go along with you, becomes very obvious.

A thoughtful book, but hard to read.

JOHN HORDER
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BRITISH ASIANS HEALTH IN THE COMMUNITY

Topics in community health series

Patience Karseras and Eirwen J. Hopkins

John Wiley and Sons, Chichester (1987)

144 pages. Price £6.50

The preface states the premiss on which this book is based: 'that the racism experienced by ethnic minorities in the delivery of health care stems more from the ignorance of practitioners than from prejudice'. It is written by two health visitors and targeted towards community nurses, social workers and others in the field of community care. Although weighted towards pregnancy, childbirth and infancy, the book gives a good outline of the cultures from which Asians in Britain come, and some of the problems they face in this country.

The authors tackle our ignorance on several fronts. A clear account of Moslem, Hindu and Sikh naming is given, thus preventing us from committing such semantic atrocities as 'Mrs Begum'. Differences in language are also discussed, for example the lack of words for 'please' and 'thank you' in some Asian languages, which can lead to a false impression of rudeness when translated. Although the book is strongly focused on physical health, the authors do touch on attitudes towards mental illness, and the tendency for depression in Asian women to present with somatic symptoms.

This is a book which could usefully be shared between all members of the primary health care team. As well as informing, it will also encourage us to examine our attitudes towards our ethnic minority patients.

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PROGRESS IN CHILD HEALTH

Volume 3

J.A. Macfarlane (Ed)

Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh (1987)

237 pages. Price £20.00

Progress in child health satisfies its aims to present up-to-date summaries of issues in the care of children. The editor is to be congratulated on producing a third volume in a relatively short time and the range of authors continues to give a broad perspective to the subject area.

In this volume, the topics covered are primarily the concern of general practitioners and community paediatricians, with a strong leaning towards preventive child care. Inevitably, some chapters are stronger than others but it is a book worth dipping into. With preventive medicine becoming an increasing part of general practice, the chapters on screening for congenital dislocation of the hip, visual defects in children and immunization are particularly relevant.

There is something for everyone in this book. It is reasonably priced and with the rapid changes in medical care this series is one which is likely to run and run.

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