

bank holiday visit from the estranged husband threatening to kill himself if his wife will not let him return. Psychiatric assessments are time consuming and the general practitioner may have several other urgent calls to make. Advice on coping with such problems might have been more forthcoming had the authors included more primary health care workers.

The book fails because it describes the acute psychiatric condition without setting it in the context which makes it an emergency.

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ENTRAPMENT IN ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

BASICS monographs on immediate care no. 5

Christopher J. Carney

British Association for Immediate Care, Ipswich (1987)
20 pages. Price £1.75

This interesting and informative short pamphlet deals with the management of patients who are trapped in road traffic accidents and is part of a series providing information on all aspects of immediate care. Although principally written for those doctors providing care at the site of accidents, I believe that the pamphlet is of relevance to us all.

The pamphlet contains good commonsense reminders about initial resuscitation and the importance of early observers, who act as the eyes and ears of the accident and emergency department. It gives helpful suggestions about the physical signs of the wreckage at the accident, and implications for the nature of the injuries sustained. The importance of regular formal contact between doctors providing immediate care and the emergency service is underlined, and there must be few of us who have not had difficulties in coordinating or communicating with the other services at the site of an accident.

I think the booklet is of value in pointing out some of the practical difficulties that may arise at the scene of an accident and how to manage them, but in reviewing this small part, I cannot help feeling that it would have been of greater value had the series been published together in a larger book.

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HELPING THE PROBLEM DRINKER

New initiatives in community care

Tim Stockwell and Sue Clement (Eds)

Croom Helm, London (1987)
298 pages. Price £22.50

There has been a revolution in the way in which we understand the nature of alcohol-related problems. We have progressed beyond the idea of two populations of drinkers — a large group of 'harm-free' social drinkers, and a minority group of 'pathological drinkers', or 'alcoholics'. It is now clear that there exists a great variation both in types and severities of alcohol-related harm. As the College's report *Alcohol — a balanced view* describes well, there exists a continuum of drinking and harm ranging from little drinking with little harm to very heavy drinking with substantial harm.

Alongside this new understanding an upsurge of interest in developing community-based responses has taken place. *Help-*

ing the problem drinker reviews the development of these responses. It ranges from a discussion of prevention of alcohol-related problems at the local level (it is a shame that this chapter came at the end, rather than the beginning) through papers on experiments in early intervention to supporting community agents and the provision of specialist alcohol services within the community. There are two chapters on intervention in general practice. One, written by myself, provides a practical guide to intervention in general practice and the other a description of the DRAMS scheme in Scotland and its use by general practitioners. However, for the most part this book is not a practical guide but a discussion of the issues.

Although I can be seen as having a personal interest in promoting this book, nevertheless it is the only review on the development of community services. It is up-to-date, comprehensive and well written and edited. The book should be read not only by planners and researchers but by those who are participants or would-be participants, including general practitioners, of this revolution.

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ONE BODY

A healing ministry in your church

David Aldridge

SPCK, London (1987)
107 pages. Price £4.95

This short and easy to read book is written mainly for church leaders who wish to start a healing ministry in their church. In many religious circles healing by faith and prayer is undergoing a revival, usually with beneficial results. However, occasionally nothing apparently happens and the patient is left confused and angry as a result of inexperienced counsellors. The author has a background of social work and counselling with the Samaritans and so the book is well balanced and sensible, encouraging Christians to seek healing spiritually and emotionally while working in cooperation with the medical profession.

As the author has wide practical experience the book is full of helpful case histories and insights. It is not a theological treatise on healing but rather a practical manual for the lay person. One particular gem is the chapter on meditation which takes the reader step by step through a process of meditation and inner healing. The book is worth buying for this chapter alone.

I disagreed with some of the views expressed but that is only to be expected with a book concerning a contentious area. Although not directed towards the medical profession I would recommend this book to all those interested in Christian healing.

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A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO ASTHMA

Readers may have had difficulty obtaining copies of *A practical approach to asthma* by R. Pauwels and P.D. Snashall, published by CBA Publishing Services of Dorking, which was reviewed in the November *Journal*. The book is available, free of charge, from Mr Mark Webster, UK Marketing Department, Fisons Pharmaceuticals, 12 Derby Road, Loughborough LE11 0BB.