

pointment was the lack of a bibliography. References would have made this book a starting point rather than an intriguing dead end.

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DISABILITY IN THE FAMILY (Video)

*Duane Bishop and Robert Wrate
Macmed, Dundee (1987)
Price £60.00*

This videotape on disability in the family shows edited extracts from an initial family interview with the Williams family. The family consists of David Williams, the father, who has suffered a severe head injury two years previously, and his wife and four children.

The interviewer skilfully moves the interview around the family members, including the father. Viewers could not fail to be impressed with the problems which have befallen this family since the accident.

The tape is organized so that it can be stopped periodically and summaries of the presenting problems are given in order to facilitate discussion. Unfortunately, this makes the tape too long for one viewing session and the repetition and slowly unfolding history becomes boring. However, the family dynamics are excellently revealed and this could make the tape effective teaching material for medical, nursing, or social work students.

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THE NEW CASE FOR EXERCISE

*P.H. Fentem, E.J. Bassey and N.B. Turnbull
Sports Council and Health Education Authority, London (1988)
40 pages. Price £2.95*

In 1976 the Department of Health and Social Security asked the Sports Council to collate and evaluate the existing evidence on the beneficial effects of exercise on health. In 1978 a report by Professor Fentem and Dr Bassey, *The case for exercise*, highlighted a number of different areas in which exercise had been shown to have beneficial effects upon health. In a superbly researched, updated and revised edition, the team from Nottingham have lucidly and comprehensively made a compelling case for exercise in programmes of health promotion and for mass sports participation. They have assessed more than 3000 international research studies, most of them published during the 10 years since their original statement and *The new case for exercise* lists 241 of the most relevant studies.

Increasingly, general practitioners are accepting the challenge to take an active lead in disease prevention and health promotion. At the same time, society is changing as unemployment and early retirement contribute to greater availability of leisure time and facilities. How should these be used? Are there benefits to be derived, and if there are, is the public, and indeed the profession, yet aware of them?

As a result of the evidence provided in *The new case for exercise*, general practitioners can now offer informed advice, encouraging their patients, relatives and friends to enjoy the benefits of exercise. The report discusses these benefits as being of special importance to the elderly or disabled and those suffering from chronic diseases, such as bronchitis, asthma and heart disease. It also discusses the contribution of exercise to the prevention and treatment of chronic conditions such as obesity, hypertension, diabetes of mature onset and osteoporosis. The

association between increasing levels of physical activity and the reduction in the incidence of coronary heart disease appears to be consistent and graded.

At £2.95, this book represents excellent value for money. Although it can be read at one sitting, its effect could be life saving. Buy it. Read it. Recommend it.

JIM McCracken

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COMMUNICATING WITH DYING PEOPLE AND THEIR RELATIVES

*Jean Lugton
Austen Cornish in association with the Lisa Sainsbury Foundation, London (1988)
108 pages. Price £6.50*

Caring for dying patients is universally acknowledged to be an extremely challenging task for professional carer and family member alike. Jean Lugton has experienced such situations both as professional nurse and personal friend, and she has drawn on this wealth of practice to bring a unique, informed authority to her writing.

Each of the nine chapters provides a valuable list of important areas to consider and will form a useful starting point for further discussion and reading. Of particular interest are the exercises at the end of each chapter, designed to help readers and their colleagues to understand the relevance of the content to their own situation. The chapter on the needs of staff is particularly important, highlighting as it does such issues as developing realistic expectations and the importance of teamwork.

It is extremely difficult to deal with such a complex topic within the confines of 108 pages and the author has made a laudable attempt to do so. However, some readers will feel frustrated at not being able to share the results of the research work on which some of the more thought provoking statements are based.

ROBIN PUGSLEY

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URINARY TRACT INFECTION IN CLINICAL AND LABORATORY PRACTICE

*Rosalind Maskell
Edward Arnold, London (1988)
268 pages. Price £25.00*

Dr Maskell is a microbiologist with the Public Health Laboratory Service in Portsmouth. She has written this book for clinicians and laboratory staff. Sadly it is authoritarian rather than authoritative and is out of touch with the clinical world. She states that writing forms should be done by doctors, as delegation to nurses 'results in misuse of the laboratory and is wasteful' and that patients should wash their perineums with soap and water before providing a urine specimen.

The author has done much to publicize her view that lactobacilli are the cause of the urethral syndrome. Her viewpoint has been decisively rebutted by colleagues at the Royal Free Hospital but she accords their careful research a brief sentence. She finds psychological explanations of illness distasteful and unscientific.

This is not an easy book to read and would have benefited from a complete ban on the use of the semi-colon. It falls between two stools by being unsuitable for either general practitioners or laboratory staff.

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