



REASSESSING COMMUNITY CARE

Nigel Malin (Ed)
Croom Helm, London (1987)
346 pages. Price £11.95

Reassessing community care is intended as a course book for students in the field of social policy, social work and nursing with particular reference to working with those with mental handicap or mental illness.

An underlying theme of the book is the need to forge links between theory and professional practice. The importance of such links is well illustrated by the contrast between the more academic chapters concerned with the policies or theories of community care, and the contributions from those with personal experience of trying to provide new services. From the academic side there are reviews of community care, descriptions of the role sets required for community psychiatric nursing, and a chapter on the theory and practice of normalization. There are research reports on small samples of the mentally handicapped, describing their independent living arrangements and community relationships, as well as a larger survey of public attitudes towards community care. From the practical side there are descriptions of intensive support units for profoundly mentally handicapped children, and of family placement schemes which provide respite for parents or short term fostering. There is also a salutary personal account of trying to run a group home for the mentally handicapped.

The typewriter style of printing and layout is off-putting, but this is a well-referenced source book on an important contemporary issue. It raises the question whether there is a policy on community care and if so — whose interests are being served? Is it a way of enforcing quality of life or a method of saving money?

D.R. HANNAY
Professor of General Practice, University of Sheffield

PRIMARY CARE ORTHOPAEDICS

Royce C. Lewis Jnr
Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh (1988)
307 pages. Price £24.95

General practice covers so many fields that it is difficult to establish the depth of knowledge required for a particular discipline. Orthopaedic problems, however, are so common that every doctor should be well versed in the management of them. Much of the chronic disease which requires long term care, with intermittent specialist help, is orthopaedic, and the competent general practitioner will want to be able to tell patients and their families about the likely role of the hospital and about the other services available. This book provides the necessary informa-

tion, despite being clearly intended for a North American audience.

As more emphasis is placed on primary care, and as orthopaedic waiting lists get longer, increasing numbers of general practitioners are learning how to do more for patients with orthopaedic problems, and they will find the detailed chapter about injection therapy most useful. There are a large number of good anatomical diagrams which will refresh the memory of the doctor as well as facilitating any explanation given to patients.

Unfortunately, the book is neither an orthopaedic textbook, nor a general enough account for primary care. It is too disease oriented to be accorded a high priority in my library.

R.M. MILNE
General Practitioner, Kirkliston, West Lothian

PRACTICAL GENERAL PRACTICE

Guidelines for logical management
Alex Khot and Andrew Polmear
Butterworth Scientific, Guildford (1988)
323 pages. Price £13.95

This book of *Practical general practice* takes common areas of general practice and provides essential lines of management for each. In their introduction the authors say that their guidelines are logical and justifiable and where there is an area of controversy they claim to take the reasonable approach. Many of their choices of drugs are personal but they note that a good case can be made for alternatives.

The book's approach is based more on the process of management and less on the outcome. The checklists of management for many common diseases are useful, although it is sometimes difficult to agree with their emphasis. For example, Parkinson's disease is given two and a half pages whereas the problem of vertigo is dealt with in one page. This approach allows little opportunity to discuss current trends, for example the general practitioner's role in early management of myocardial infarction is summarized in one sentence: 'The result of recent trials indicates that thrombolysis may significantly improve prognosis if instituted within the first four hours.' In the checklist for reasons for referral to hospital in myocardial infarction the presence of arrhythmias and the persistence of chest pain do not merit a mention.

However, the book provides a good summary of management strategies and contains useful addresses and phone numbers. It would be a helpful book for trainees as well as more established practitioners.

T.S. MURRAY
Senior Lecturer in General Practice,
University of Glasgow