

day general practice. This comprehensive review of the current literature on the prevention of mental illness provides the theoretical base which underpins these activities. Hopefully it will also provide some guidance and support to general practitioners who perceive the enormous potential of this field of activity but find themselves floundering when they have to decide what to do.

*Preventing mental illness* does not provide all the answers, but at least the questions are raised. What should be the balance between emphasizing resources which facilitate health and growth as opposed to a disease model which searches for noxious agents which might be eliminated or buffered by protective factors? How does one disentangle the relationship between vulnerability and protective factors and their joint influence on the outcome of a stressful life event? High self-esteem is an important protective factor. How can we help to enhance it? What is the role of general practitioners and what is their optimum relationship with psychiatrists? How can community resources best be harnessed to promote positive mental health?

All of these questions and many more are explored with great clarity and with the support of an extensive bibliography. This book is essential and enjoyable reading for anyone whose work involves mental health issues and this should include all general practitioners.

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#### **GUIDELINES FOR SETTING UP AND RUNNING A CARDIAC REHABILITATION PROGRAMME**

*The Coronary Prevention Group, London (1989)  
65 pages. Price £3.50*

Based on a conference organized by the Coronary Prevention Group, the booklet has been written for any health professional who wants to start up a cardiac rehabilitation programme for patients who have suffered a heart attack or undergone heart surgery. It is further suggested that the material would be useful for lay people wanting to initiate such a programme.

I felt positively disposed towards the review: the format is attractive with its white cover, little red hearts to highlight points, and cartoons by Larry; and I felt guilty that our practice has no formal policy on helping patients who have had a major coronary event. Unfortunately my enthusiasm turned to disappointment.

Perhaps inevitably for a book which is aimed at a wide group of health professionals, the explanation of medical terms is overly simplistic. Most of the booklet is devoted to discussing how a rehabilitation programme can be set up and the areas that would have to be considered by any organizer are well laid out. However, there is insufficient information to enable someone to set up a programme solely using this material: other books would have to be read or specialists contacted. Definitive statements would have been useful on what specific details should be covered with patients, what specific exercises might be advised and how to perform these. Thus, the book is a lot less valuable to a busy general practitioner than it might have been. My major criticism of the text is the unnecessary and persistent repetition which occurs throughout and the booklet seemed to be very disorganized. On a positive note, though, there are some useful addresses for further reading, relevant organizations and references at the end of the text.

Despite my criticisms, on balance I would purchase a copy since it is reasonably priced and might just stimulate somebody in the practice to set up a programme. With current pressure

on doctors to perform more primary prevention, there could be a real danger that secondary prevention will fall by the wayside. General practice has never been good at providing facilities for people who have established disease despite the evidence that investment in secondary prevention, particularly in diseases like heart attack, is extremely beneficial not only for improved morbidity and mortality but also in helping patients and their families to achieve normal lives after a devastating life event.

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#### **TREATING DRUG ABUSERS**

*Gerald Bennett (ed)  
Routledge, London (1989)  
201 pages. Price £25.00*

This welcome new book edited by Gerald Bennett contains a collection of chapters by workers from different disciplines in areas as far apart as Dorset, Hampshire, Birmingham, Rochdale and Paisley who examine important aspects of clinical practice in treating drug abuse. As the introduction states: 'for the most part, practice has gone beyond research and is guided by an amalgam of experience and theory, with drug services developing rapidly to cope with the changing British drug scene and problems such as AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome]'.

The early chapters examine learning theory and motivational change, followed by practical aspects of treatment, including family therapy, relapse prevention, the role of prescribing, benzodiazepine withdrawal and AIDS related issues, all of which are well debated with controversies aired, historical perspectives given where relevant, and useful lists of references. The final part of the book covers development of services and prescribing practice, together with the emergence of community drug teams.

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