

as 'a new and original effort at interdisciplinary communication' may have failed because it tries to be all things to all disciplines. I regret I cannot recommend it to general practitioners.

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

NURSING A PROBLEM

Lesley Mackay
Open University Press, Milton Keynes (1989)
200 pages. Price £25.00 h/b, £9.95 p/b

This book concerns the problems of nurses working in the National Health Service and should be of interest to all health professionals. The author, a sociologist, obtained the views of over 700 nurses, working in a variety of settings, in one health authority area. Self-completion questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the information.

Respondents' quotes are used liberally and, at the end of each chapter, the author draws her conclusions. Unfortunately, we are not told how the nurses or the quotes were selected, how the study was introduced or what questions or comments generated the answers. There can be no doubt that the author has been successful in highlighting some key problems within nursing, such as constraints, frustrations, constant changes, thwarted idealism and lack of tolerance. However, her approach seemed to invite reports of problems and difficulties and if there were any sources of satisfaction, they did not stand much chance of being included.

The author makes no unjustified claims of generalizability and states clearly that the picture she describes is her own view. With that important proviso, her report deserves attention.

LISBETH HOCKEY
Guest professor and consultant in nursing research,
University of Edinburgh

ON-CALL

Out-of-hours telephone calls and home visits
J.D.E. Knox
Oxford University Press (1989)
66 pages. Price £5.95

The series *Practical guides for general practice* has covered a variety of subjects including screening, immunization and several clinical topics. It also includes the best book yet written on practice computing. This latest monograph pulls together most of the literature on out-of-hours primary care and should be essential reading for vocational trainees and aspiring practice managers. It will serve as a valuable reference book for anyone with more than a passing interest in the organization of primary care.

The way in which general practitioners deal with out-of-hours responsibilities is an emotive subject and in *On-call* both the patients' and the doctors' needs and rights are viewed in an objective and non-partisan manner. There must always be a compromise between availability and accessibility and Professor Knox treads a wise and wary path. He makes the assumption that British general practitioners prefer the continuity of their own practices to the services of independent deputizing agencies, yet fully recognizes the problems and constraints imposed by modern city life.

This book is full of practical information on different telephone systems and on the organization and documentation of out-of-hours work. Interpersonal aspects are well covered, including the importance of intermediaries between patient and doctor, and patients' views and needs are carefully considered. What equipment to take to an out-of-hours call is discussed, as are the occasions when doctors might decide that taking any equipment could put themselves at unacceptable risk. Mention of the need for a police escort comes as a shock to this reviewer in his rural enclave.

MALCOLM AYLETT
General practitioner, Wooler, Northumberland

FAMILIES, SERVICES AND CONFUSION IN OLD AGE

Enid Leven, Ian Sinclair and Peter Gorbach
Avebury, Hants (1989)
328 pages. Price £29.50

The somewhat clumsy title of this book at least describes its remit. The authors are concerned to draw attention to the impact on carers and the health and social services of the progressive dependency produced by dementia and this they have certainly done. They describe a survey they have conducted and review the literature and all the problems involved with dementia in a thorough manner. This conscientiousness, however, is not without cost for it leads the authors to give seemingly endless examples to illustrate every point, which makes for turgid reading in some parts. These examples are sometimes thumbnail sketches of family problems and sometimes quotations. The situations described are all too familiar to any member of the public and constant repetition seems pointless. Most chapters, however, end with a summary of the main points and these are excellent. The chapters on services are first class and the conclusions should be required reading for all doctors, especially in the light of recent reports of some carers not getting the support to which they are entitled in the community.

This is a book for the practice library, as a source of reference and to help with teaching.

A.J. TULLOCH
Research fellow, Unit of Clinical Epidemiology,
University of Oxford

UNDERSTANDING HAEMOPHILIA

A personal account and practical guide for parents, teachers and the caring professions
Marie Berger
Ashgrove Press, Bath (1989)
143 pages. Price £4.95

To be told that your child has a serious incurable condition is devastating for any parent. When the disorder is also genetically determined, there is the added fear for the health of other children in the family, their children, and any future pregnancies. While expecting her fourth baby Marie Berger learnt that her third child had haemophilia and then that his elder sister also had the condition.

Her book confronts the emotional turmoil of such a situation. She explains in simple language the facts about haemophilia and dispels the fallacies and misconceptions that abound. There is practical advice about dealing with problems as they arise without letting them dominate people's lives.

I strongly recommend this book to anyone who has a family history of haemophilia. It also makes sound reading for health professionals and teachers who are involved with such families. Some features can be extrapolated to apply to any family with a handicapped child and the strongest maxim in the book is that which emphasizes that the child with a handicap is first and foremost a child: 'Keep your eye upon the doughnut and not upon the hole.'

ANGELA DOUGLAS
General practitioner, Exeter

LIVING WITH DYING

The management of terminal disease

Cicely Saunders and Mary Baines

Oxford University Press (1989)

67 pages. Price £8.95

Many general practitioners and district nurses wish to look after their dying patients at home. This small volume provides practical information on pain and symptom relief and addresses the ethical problems which can arise. The knowledge gained from a large 'teaching hospice', St Christopher's, is applicable in general hospitals and at home. This surely must be the trend for 'hospice' care in the future.

The authors share their considerable experience and wisdom in an introduction which covers telling patients the truth about their illness, euthanasia and death with dignity and acknowledging the difficulties faced by professional carers. Good symptom control can be achieved by the competent use of a small number of drugs, adjuvant therapies and an awareness of the concept of 'total pain'. With the relief of pain comes the opportunity to discuss patients' social, emotional and spiritual concerns. The book ends with a short list of key references.

Living with dying provides an excellent summary of current hospice teaching and will give doctors and nurses confidence

in their management and support of patients with advanced cancer.

DAVID JEFFREY

General practitioner, Evesham, Worcestershire

NO FAULT COMPENSATION IN MEDICINE

Ronald D. Mann and John Harvard (eds)

Royal Society of Medicine, London

273 pages. Price £20.00

No fault compensation in medicine reports the proceedings of a two day meeting at the Royal Society of Medicine attended by victims, lawyers and doctors from the UK and from countries with various forms of no fault compensation. It provides a rich source of experience, references and opinion from a wide range of well informed sources.

Practical experience in New Zealand, Sweden and Finland is reported together with well argued positions from interest groups. However, anyone expecting to find evidence that no fault compensation is the answer to all the problems of our present tort based system will be disappointed. The only point on which there was universal agreement was that the present tort based system of compensation is in need of reform. The contributors should be given credit for their generally reserved and reasoned presentations of the disadvantages as well as the advantages of their suggested reforms.

The central philosophical difficulty with no fault compensation is summarized by the contributor who quoted Lord Skelmersdale, '...the man who suffers brain damage — through no one's fault — on the operating table is compensated. The man who suffers equivalent injuries by a stroke would get none'.

Although this is not a book for the practice library, it is useful as a source of information on this difficult problem for which there are no simple solutions.

BRIAN GOSS

General practitioner, Bungay, Suffolk

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

ALL MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE

Fellows, Members and Associates of The Royal College of General Practitioners may claim a 10% reduction when booking classified advertisements in The Journal.

The Journal is your publication — why not take advantage of the special terms.

COURSES
PARTNERSHIPS
ASSISTANTSHIPS
TRAINEES, etc.

All enquiries to: Debby Tardif, I.M.A., 7a Portland Road, Hythe, Kent CT21 6EG.
Telephone: (0303) 264803/62272. Fax: (0303) 62269.

SUNNY KAPITI COAST (New Zealand)

Locum or assistant with view for rapidly growing group teaching practice. FMTF trained with Obstetrics preferred. For further details contact Dr. F. Millard, PO Box 146, Paraparaumu, New Zealand. Fax No. 010-64-58-83603 Phone No. 010-64-58-72323.

DIPLOMA IN PRACTICAL DERMATOLOGY

A 30-week extramural teaching programme organised by the University of Wales College of Medicine Section of Dermatology leads to the DIPLOMA IN PRACTICAL DERMATOLOGY. The aim of this challenging course is to equip the general practitioner with a sound practical understanding of skin disease as it presents in practice. There are weekly structured reading and writing tasks with a clinical dissertation. Weekly video programmes by British Medical Television, weekly audio cassettes and two study weekends in Cardiff are planned. Continual assessment and a final examination lead to the Diploma in Practical Dermatology. The second course, commencing in April 1990, is now fully booked; applications are invited for the third course starting in April 1991. For more details please write to:-

The Course Secretary
Diploma in Practical Dermatology
Department of Medicine (Dermatology)
University of Wales College of Medicine
Heath Park, CARDIFF CF4 4XN.