

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

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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:-

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