



THE CASE FOR GENERAL PRACTICE MATERNITY CARE

D Jewell, G Young, L Zander
Association for general practice maternity care (1990)
 18 pages. Price £1.00

This excellent pamphlet, for it is only 18 pages long, spells out clearly and cogently the reasons why general practitioners should participate in maternity care. Its strength lies in the lucid well-referenced arguments that it propounds. It should be compulsory reading for every general practitioner trainee and trainer, particularly the great majority who are doing (or have done) a six month hospital obstetric job. Because I agree so profoundly with the book's arguments I find it difficult to criticize but there are a few weaknesses.

First, the book does not emphasize the differences between the essential involvement of every self-respecting general practitioner of the 1990s in antenatal, puerperal and postnatal care with the more optional involvement of a small, but I hope increasing, proportion of general practitioners in intranatal care.

Secondly, it does not differentiate sufficiently between the role of the general practitioner and the role of the midwife when attending their mutual patient in labour. There is more to the general practitioner's participation than being 'a familiar person' and 'sharing responsibility'.

Thirdly, it suggests that 'experienced midwives should have a substantial role in training general practitioner trainees'. It should also suggest that experienced general practice obstetricians should undertake more of the teaching of student midwives, replacing some of the technologically oriented teaching of specialist obstetricians.

Like most general practitioners, I do not read many books but this one is easy — it takes only 20 minutes — and is well worth it.

It is available from The Surgery, Barn Croft, Temple Sowerby, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 1RZ.

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TREATING DRUG ABUSERS

Gerald Bennett (ed)
Routledge, London (1990)
 201 pages. Price £9.99

The authorship of this book is dominated by psychologists, most of whom have extensive and varied experience of managing the many aspects of drug abuse covered here in 11 easy to read chapters. For primary care workers it is an extremely useful summary of many of the theories behind treatment, the history of

policy in the UK and the development of new models of treatment in response to new requirements. Some chapters are better than others, a particularly good one being the editor's introduction which takes a broad view of the field without being tempted into any of the problematic and controversial areas.

The contributions on family therapy, benzodiazepine dependence and relapse prevention training are all useful for primary care workers, especially as an introduction to these areas often neglected by general practitioners and others.

Chapters on medical treatments for problem drug takers, drug treatment and prescribing practices are written by accomplished authors and give good accounts of the inherent difficulties, contradictions and stresses for doctors and patients. However, they do not leave the reader with a clear idea of how to proceed and may indeed scare some readers off forever. The constantly repeated uncertainty and the frankly obvious lack of good long-term research raises anxieties about some suggested therapies and the exhortation to 'first do no harm' coming at the end of a chapter on prescribing does not dispel this state.

'Facing up to AIDS' might be expected to be a difficult chapter to write at a time of immense growth in information. Some of the advice in this book is already out of date or superseded by new data. An example of the former being the section entitled 'true facts' which may be useful for mothers. The facts are not correct although the advice is.

Certain other features of the AIDS chapter irritate a bit and the abbreviation of antibody positive to AB+ is unconventional and confusing. The safe sex messages are not specially geared to young drug users: tips on sado-masochist practices, water sports and sex toys may not be as important as discussion about why many young drug users and others find safe sex difficult to practice, their need for a pregnancy and so on.

A good book, but one which addresses issues in a rapidly changing field.

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RESUSCITATION AND TRAINING

A Bristow, V Dallos and G C Hanson (eds)
Farrand Press, London (1989)
 263 pages. Price £19.80

Fifteen of the 17 chapters of this book are devoted to resuscitation and only two chapters to training. The editors predict that the book will need updating and this is already true. For example, it is now widely accepted that the principal benefit of adrenaline in cardiopulmonary arrest is not that it makes the heart more susceptible to defibrillation but that it improves cerebral and coronary perfusion. The Resuscitation Council (UK)