



HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Cicely Saunders (ed)

Hodder and Stoughton, Kent (1990)

120 pages. Price £8.95

This short paperback is a welcome addition to other work written by the St Christopher's Hospice team. After many years of experience in palliative care they are in a good position to describe plainly and honestly some of the tensions that arise among staff members in caring for terminally ill people. The lessons to be learnt from this, particularly those described in Tom West's chapter, should be applicable to anybody working in any interdisciplinary setting, be it hospital or general practice, as well as those in a hospice.

The chapter by Linda Jackson on the difficulties for the ward sister in managing her staff is a clear account of team leadership and should give confidence to anyone wishing to instigate a change in nursing patterns.

The chapters on care of the motor neurone disease patient and the role of the chaplain initially seemed weaker, but no less valid in the contribution they make to the global picture of the stresses and strains of caring for extremely ill patients. This book is good value for a simple paperback. I have already given it to two senior nurses to read. This sort of literature can enhance the workings of an interdisciplinary team and should be read by anyone working across professional boundaries.

ILORA FINLAY

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THE GREENING OF MEDICINE

Patrick Pietroni

Gollancz, London (1990)

227 pages. Price £14.95

I suspect that this book was written with a lay audience in mind but I enjoyed the opening section, which is a review of the origins of green medicine. In the second part of the book Dr Pietroni outlines the problems of medical care in the twentieth century, opening with the now familiar arguments on over-prescribing. I was pleased that he did recognize that this was not all the fault of the doctor; patients who demand miracle cures must share some of the blame. In subsequent chapters he identifies problems connected with man's health and his misuse of the environment: air and water pollution, chloro-fluorocarbons and ozone depletion, sick-building syndrome, nuclear radiation hazards and so on. The information given makes persuasive reading. The final section of the book deals with possible solu-

tions and highlights new approaches to dealing with causes of ill health such as cancer and mental illness.

It was a pity that throughout the book Dr Pietroni felt it necessary to highlight the shortcomings of the medical profession and denigrate the work which is being done in today's National Health Service. I suppose that is what politics is about — to make one's position look better than that of the establishment. It certainly does not advance the cause of the green movement to make such remarks as 'doctors would be happier to study disease than to actually treat patients', nor does it seem helpful to describe treatments for cancer such as surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy as 'aggressively masculine' while psychotherapy, mental imagery and dietary intervention are given as examples of the 'gentler more feminine approach'. I was hoping to read about Dr Pietroni's work in the Marylebone health centre, but unfortunately only a short account is included in the last chapter. Perhaps more information will be forthcoming as this experiment in health care progresses.

MARTIN BARKER

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THE CHILD SURVEILLANCE HANDBOOK

D M B Hall, P Hill, D Elliman

Radcliffe Medical Press, Oxford (1990)

257 pages. Price £14.95

Child surveillance no longer involves a list of pass-fail tests picking up a few conditions which will usually be found anyway, but is now a more flexible routine with emphasis on the specific needs of children at a particular age and in a particular setting.

This handbook provides frontline workers with a logical and practical information base when caring for children aged under five years and their families. It not only gives good advice on the early detection and management of problems, secondary prevention and the routine of child health surveillance, but also emphasizes primary prevention and health promotion. It encourages a team approach among professionals and the family, emphasizing the parents' role as the principle witness of normal and abnormal development and as agents for change.

The child surveillance handbook covers problem solving as well as screening. The most common concerns are dealt with in the most detail. Fashionable fads are mentioned critically, immunization routines are clarified and emotional as well as sexual and physical abuse is recognized. The frequent behavioural difficulties of toddlers and older children are particularly well covered, offering solutions with insight.

The importance of clear and accurate records are mentioned but the needs for standardization and that the records should