

medicine to one year of hospital posts, and two years in a training practice, with an optional elective year which may be in hospitals, general practice, special skills training or a mix of these.

The fascinating description of assessment and training shows that several countries have devised interesting solutions to the problems of formative and summative assessment that we in the UK are currently struggling to resolve. There is much to learn from their descriptions and solutions.

John Fry always stressed the value of learning from the practice of family medicine in other countries. This book illustrates the truth of this conviction and will be of great value to all involved in teaching, training, and identifying the most cost-effective ways to provide good quality primary care.

BEN ESSEX

*General practitioner, Sydenham*

**FUNDHOLDERS' HANDBOOK: A REFERENCE FOR EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE**

Mary Jordan

*Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford (1994)*

248 pages. Price £25.00

Mary Jordan knew that there was a desperate need for a handbook for fundholders about preparing for and managing a fund so she set about writing it. Undoubtedly, she has succeeded in writing a reference for effective administrative practice. For those of us mystified by National Health Service speak, bombarded by changing regulations and unsure what is permitted, here is a guide through the maze, written in clear English.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part covers comprehensively the preparations for fundholding. I do not know a better text. The second part covers administration of the fund and provides excellent advice for fund managers, explaining simply how the accounting works and the day to day administration of the fund. Aspects of fund management which concern general practitioners are less well covered. The drug budget, every fundholder's piggy bank, is covered in only two pages. The third part is a thorough account of strategic management of the fund. One small criticism is the lack of information about running in-house clinics.

The book is clearly written from both personal experience and that of many other fundholding practices which makes it the best in the field. I have particular sympathy for the author's comments on how to build a good team, cope with change, and manage the practice well. Overall, this book will be of most use to practices preparing for fundholding and fund managers. Experienced fundholders will find it useful to read but less instructive.

JAMES A DUNBAR

*General practitioner, Dundee*

**MANAGEMENT AND COMPETITION IN THE NEW NHS**

Chris Ham

*Radcliffe, Oxford (1994)*

86 pages. Price £12.50

This one of the most sensible and readable books that I have read about the National Health Service reforms. It is also commendably short. Professor Chris Ham is director of the

Health Services Management Centre at Birmingham and has 'lived and breathed the NHS reforms for the past six years'. His book is divided into four sections covering the background, implementation, impact and the future of the NHS reforms. The text has a slightly racy style, reminiscent more of political biography than academic text, and the book is most valuable for its personal insights into the reforms rather than a recantation of recent health service history. Many general practitioners who have borne the brunt of recent health policies will empathize with comments that *Working for patients* has 'all the hallmarks of a strategy only half thought through' or that 'Ministers have pursued a large number of initiatives [which] overload the health policy agenda and create the impression of a lack of vision at the highest level.' In the section on primary care, Chris Ham is no less trenchant in his comments, and it is reassuring to find that a senior commentator on the NHS reforms is able to understand the problems, as well as the opportunities, facing general practitioners.

The NHS reforms are not a subject of great interest to many general practitioners although they affect us all. We should be grateful that the author has been able to distil his experiences so lucidly: a must for the practice library.

CLIVE RICHARDS

*Former general practitioner, now senior registrar in Public Health Medicine, Bristol*

**RCGP**

Education  
Network



**THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF  
GENERAL PRACTITIONERS  
RECERTIFICATION FELLOWSHIP**

The Royal College of General Practitioners has a major commitment to the development of recertification for its members. In order to develop the College's objectives in this area, the College intends to

appoint a part time fellow. The main aims of the fellowship will be to investigate and develop the options for recertification for College members. The Fellow will be responsible for developing methodology and devising mechanisms for its implementation within a defined time scale.

The College is seeking to appoint a senior general practitioner who has considerable experience and standing in the profession. Applicants should be members of the College with a strong commitment to the College's values and a demonstrable interest in recertification. They will have a proven track record in the delivery of general practice education and possess high level inter-personal skills.

It is expected that the appointment will be for a two year period on a part time basis up to four sessions per week (negotiable). The remuneration will be pro-rata equivalent to the NHS consultant scale. It is expected that the fellow will be based in, or will have links with, an appropriate academic institution.

For further application details, please contact Dr Aly Rashid, Chairman, Education Network, RCGP, 14 Princes Gate, Hyde Park, London SW7 1PU.

Closing date for applications: 9 December 1994.