

text neatly overcomes the problem of differentiating between definite advice (given in the form of 'commandments') and conjecture. It is possible to take issue with some of these commandments, such as, 'always use diet first in [non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus]', but on the whole there is little to argue about in this respect.

The book does not attempt to compete with established textbooks and, although major trials (such as the diabetes care and complications trial) are explained in detail, no references are given. Many of the clinical scenarios are enlivened by imaginary correspondence between the general practitioner and the consultant. For me this is the weakest part of the book, as the letters are extremely long and unlike any referral letters I have ever sent or received. The style is light, making for easy reading but this is both an advantage and a disadvantage. It is not a book that I would read several times or use for reference, even though the index is comprehensive.

In spite of these minor criticisms, Fox and Pickering have produced a useful addition to the literature on diabetes and they are to be congratulated on taking a fresh approach.

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#### **MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN PRIMARY CARE: A PRACTICAL GUIDE**

*Elizabeth Armstrong  
Macmillan Press, Basingstoke (1995)  
143 pages. Price £10.00*

The author of this book on mental health issues is a nurse who has wide experience of working in primary care as a district nurse, health visitor and, from 1991, as facilitator in a mental health facilitator project which involved working with six general practices in inner London. The issues discussed are highly relevant because mental illness is a key area in the government's 'health of the nation' document (1992). The final chapter of the book is on 'meeting the targets'.

Although not a textbook, simple definitions are given which clarify the issues under discussion. Up-to-date information is clearly presented and references are all gathered in a section at the end of the book. The advice given suggests realistic and practical ways of making better use of existing resources, within both the primary care team and specialist mental health services. It is therefore likely to be widely replicable, unlike models that rely on highly trained mental health professionals being attached to general practices.

It is evident that the author is a meticulous researcher. She has also put the conclusions of her research into practice. Her inner city practice experience shows through in her highlighting of the needs of ethnic minorities.

As a psychiatrist with experience of working in primary care I approached this book with some scepticism. I read it, however, with increasing interest and enthusiasm. I shall be re-reading it and hopefully persuading others to help me put the proposals into practice locally.

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### **STUDY DAY ON SPORT & HEALTH: FITNESS FOR OVER 50s 29 November 1995**

This study day, organised in association with the Sports Council, will examine the role of physical activity in the health of people over fifty. The programme considers both the physiological and the sociological factors involved in promoting physical exercise as a method of health care, and includes presentations on schemes which have been established to enable GPs to "prescribe" exercise for patients.

All members of the primary health care team are welcome to attend.

Delegate fee £55.00 (incl of VAT). PGEA applied for.

For further details please contact: RCGP Courses, 14 Princes Gate, Hyde Park, London SW7 1PU.  
Tel: 0171 823 9703 Fax: 0171 225 3047.

### **Annual Symposium RESEARCH IN GENERAL PRACTICE Regents College, Regent's Park, London NW1 Thursday 16 November 1995**

This year's Symposium seeks to raise the profile of research in general practice, covering the whole spectrum of research from simple projects right through to work forming the basis of an MD thesis. Plenary Speakers include Professor Sir Michael Peckham, Director of Research & Development at the Department of Health, and Professor Andrew Haines, Director of Research & Development, North Thames Regional Health Authority.

The programme will consist of academic presentations on new research as well as teaching sessions on research methods. **Topics include:**

- Doing an MD
- Research General Practices
- Qualitative and quantitative research
- How to get published
- How to get help

Whether you are thinking about undertaking research within general practice, or are an experienced researcher, this conference will have something for you.

Delegate fee (inclusive of VAT) £60.00 including lunch and refreshments. PGEA and Section 63 approved.

*For further details please contact:*

RCGP Courses & Conference Unit, 14 Princes Gate, Hyde Park, London SW7 1PU. Tel: 0171 823 9703 Fax: 0171 225 3047

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