

Book Reviews

General Practice. Report of a W.H.O. Expert Committee. World Health Organization: Technical Report Series, No. 267. Geneva. 1964. Pp. ii +24. Price 1s. 9d. London. H.M. Stationery Office.

This is an important document. Looking at general practice on the world scale, it distills into a remarkably small volume a large proportion of the non-clinical problems which face readers of this *Journal*. There is very little here which is not relevant to this country. It is shorter and easier to read than most W.H.O. reports.

Its importance is firstly due to its origin. The World Health Organization, whose works are surprisingly little recognized inside this country, is now a very important body with the governments of the world as a whole. After paying no attention to general practice in its first ten years, it has devoted four expert committees to it since 1961. The present one follows quickly on another on the training of the physician for his work in the community, which in turn follows one on general practice aspects of mental health care. There is now a fourth on preventive medicine for practitioners. Each expert committee involves two years of work for an international group.

In all these reports the view which appears at the end of this one is consistently expressed:

General practitioners fulfil an essential function and will continue for the foreseeable future to fulfil an essential function in the medical services of all communities, since the kind of continuing and comprehensive care that they provide meets the basic needs of the individual, the family and the community.

The present report, to which a member of this College made a dominant contribution, contains much that is already current practice in this country. In reporting the recommendation of the expert committee on training that "all graduates who choose family practice as their future work should undergo a period of postgraduate study and preparation specially designed to meet their needs", it is in advance of our current practice (and we should be ashamed of our slowness).

The section of the report on the future of general practice is particularly interesting. The final recommendation—entirely for research projects in the organization of medical care—are the most original part. There are ten in all and they are forward-looking and concrete. Here are some examples:

A comparative study of hospital services in which the patients are cared for by full-time specialists and hospital services in which they are

cared for by general practitioners.

Studies of the various types of general-practitioner records with a view to preparing a phototype incorporating the best pictures of each type.

A study of the usefulness of periodic medical examinations in relation to their cost, where and how often they should be done, the specific examinations to be carried out, and the percentage of examinations revealing dangerous pathological conditions.

A detailed study of the organization, operation, efficacy, and acceptability of general practice in as many forms as possible over a wide area.

Measles Vaccines. A report of a WHO Scientific Group. WHO Technical Report Series No. 263. London. H.M. Stationery Office. 1963. Pp. 40. Price 3s.6d.

This report contains the collective views of an international group of experts on the development of measles vaccines. It presents detailed information about many aspects of the subject in good readable English. A short summary on previous studies of Enders' Edmonston B strain vaccine is followed in greater detail by short reports about work in Yugoslavia, Japan, U.S.S.R., Nigeria, Britain, and America. Later chapters discuss the value and limitations of killed and attenuated live vaccines, severe reactions after vaccination, contra-indications to measles vaccines and precautions in their use, and the safety testing of present and future vaccines. Finally the reader is given a brief indication of the lines which future studies should follow.

Any family doctor who expects to use or be asked about measles vaccine should read this report soon.

Age and Need. A Study of Older People in North-east Scotland. I. M. RICHARDSON, M.D., PH.D., F.R.C.P.E., D.P.H. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1964. Pp. vi + 124. Price 25s.

Any book published under the imprimatur of a regional hospital board, sponsored by the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust and issuing from the department of social medicine of a great university must command immediate attention and respect. In his introduction to this survey the author reveals how it resulted from a conference convened by the North-east (Scotland) Regional Hospital Board to examine the statutory and voluntary services for old people in that area. Dr Richardson stresses the special role of hospital boards in localized research schemes of this kind and suggests that the "regional co-ordinating function of a hospital board could, perhaps, be developed more widely".

Dr Richardson and his research team of two doctors, both experienced in and familiar with the problems of general practice, and two trained social workers launched a well-planned and carefully executed enquiry into the medical and social needs of nearly 500 ageing men and women drawn from eleven randomly chosen practices in the city and rural