

Medicine and Books

Moral decisions in medicine

In That Case: Medical Ethics in Everyday Practice. Alastair V Campbell and Roger Higgs. (Pp 124; £4.50.) Darton, Longman, and Todd. 1982.

There has been a recent upsurge of interest in medical ethics. Ian Kennedy began it by questioning the right of doctors, untrained in moral philosophy, to write their own code of ethics. The judge in the Leonard Arthur trial augmented it by establishing in his summing up that medical ethics have no legal status. It became clear that in future doctors would have to think carefully before making quasiclinical decisions, such as withholding treatment from patients, and would be wise to learn something about ethical analysis.

This book, by a teacher of ethics and a general practitioner, is the perfect introduction to the subject. It deals with the decisions doctors make every day on what seem to be clinical grounds but are often in fact moral ones. It is based on the case of Angie Carter, a 16 year old to whom her GP is called because she has abdominal pain. He has known her since childhood and regards her as bright and intelligent. As he climbs the stairs to her home he recalls that when she came to his surgery recently with a sore throat she had seemed about to talk about something else but hadn't. Her mother opened the door and he sensed an atmosphere of conflict. Angie was lying in bed staring at the wall and answered his questions grudgingly: careful examination revealed no abnormality. Her mother then said that Angie was going to leave school and marry her boyfriend. The doctor wrote a prescription for tranquillisers and gave it to her mother and asked Angie gently to come and see him next day. As he went out her father, angry and smelling of drink, said that she would do so over his dead body. The doctor felt uneasy about the whole situation but was already late for surgery and left. Angie's story then unfolds in a series of crises. She gets pregnant and conceals it. Her father has a row with the boyfriend followed by a heart attack and dies in the hospital casualty department. Angie, always close to her father, is filled with guilt and remorse. She breaks with her boyfriend, takes an overdose, has a premature baby and then a postpartum haemorrhage. The baby spends his first few weeks in an incubator until he and Angie move out to a small flat instead of to her mother's home. The health visitor finds Angie apathetic and not coping so a social worker is brought in. A case conference follows attended by health visitor, social worker, GP, and psychiatrist, each giving a different opinion about what should be done. The story ends with Angie going into a psychiatric hospital for treatment of her postnatal depression and the baby taken into care.

The core of the book is the analysis by the authors of the decisions made by health professionals on Angie's behalf. At each of the crises different choices might have been made with better outcomes for Angie and her baby. Each chapter ends with a list of examples of other moral dilemmas: an ill man determined to die pulling at the shunt attaching him to the kidney machine, getting gangrene of the arm, refusing to be operated on; the sterilisation of a promiscuous young girl whose later steady relationship is threatened by her inability to conceive; an extract from Tolstoy of a patient railing at his doctors because they will

not tell him that he is dying. All are problems that doctors are called on to deal with. The authors point out that doctors do not have to become masters of moral philosophy but that they ought to be more sensitive to their patients' needs and more self-critical in their attitudes to ethical questions. This book should be in every teaching practice library and be required reading for every medical student.

ANDREW SMITH

Rehabilitation of patients

Going Home: a Guide for Helping the Patient on Leaving Hospital. J E Peter Simpson and Ruth Levitt. (Pp 334; £7.95.) Churchill Livingstone. 1981.

Going Home is not simply a guide for those leaving hospital. Much of the book is concerned with the social, physical, and financial aids, voluntary and statutory, that are available for the housebound. Advice is offered to families and friends, but also to members of the health care team through discussion of practices that have proved sound and worthy.

The editors are to be congratulated on their wide choice of 34 contributors. In view of the importance of social elements in the adjustment of patients and the disabled to their circumstances it is interesting to read contributions from social workers. Several authors emphasised the value of joint discussion, between hospital professionals, of patients' problems. It saves time if, as H M Hodgkinson suggests, all relevant workers—doctors, sisters, social workers, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, speech therapist, and, if possible, a senior district nursing officer—meet briefly at least once a week to review the patients on the ward.

Many of the chapters highlight the importance of communications in the care of patients leaving hospital. Most hospitals have difficulty getting a full report to the patient's GP within a few days of discharge: more attention needs to be paid to this problem. In a chapter "On going home after a heart attack" K Ball comments that early ambulation and discussion of the plan of treatment helps to reduce anxiety in patients and relatives. Unthinking discourtesy in the manner in which some doctors conduct ward rounds may cause anxiety. Many patients, not only those with cardiac disorders, need to be given detailed advice about their condition and how to cope with it, and they will remember more if it is put in writing. S Crown remarks "No-one knows the prevalence, or the effects, of sexual problems in patients going home from hospital." So it was nice to see K Ball include comments on sexual intercourse, an activity that many doctors and nurses, by their habit of ignoring it, seem to believe their patients do not practise. Advice against smoking may well, as here, be baldly stated, but the patient may be helped to overcome what is, after all, an addiction by sympathetic advice.

Several authors discuss the need to bring the relatives into

discussion of the patient's care. An oversolicitous spouse may wreck the efforts of the hospital to get a patient active. Relatives of patients with chronic renal failure need support and training to enable the patient to receive the best care. H M Hodgkinson points out that relatives of patients needing physical rehabilitation may learn what to do by actively joining in the treatment in the ward. Mention is made of the value of patients helping each other, and of improving their care by working with doctors and nurses. Patients who have undergone ileostomy (discussed by H B Devlin) or mastectomy (by J S Steele) are good examples of this.

There is a perceptive practical chapter by two nurses, P Turton and J W Barnett, on the contribution that nurses, both hospital and community, can make to the care of patients "going home." Many neurologists would not regard epilepsy as an "absolute bar to driving" (D S Smith and S Glossop) under all circumstances.

This is an excellent book and good value for the price. It reads well for such diverse authorship, a tribute to the editors.

NELSON COGHILL

Surgery on both sides of the Atlantic

Essential Surgical Practice. Ed A Cuschieri, G R Giles, and A R Moossa. (Pp 1277; £35.) Wright PSG. 1982.

Professor Goligher's foreword to *Essential Surgical Practice* states that this entirely new textbook is aimed chiefly at surgical trainees working for the Fellowship of the British Royal Colleges of Surgeons or participating in United States surgical residencies. The book contains 79 chapters, and its 66 contributors are drawn mainly from Dundee and Leeds in the United Kingdom and Chicago in America, which are the home centres of the three senior editors. The editors have limited the range of *Essential Surgical Practice* by excluding orthopaedics and justify this by the ready availability of excellent textbooks of orthopaedic surgery and the fact that orthopaedics has moved considerably from the practice of the general surgeon. This may be true for surgical practice but the examination candidate will find a different expectation about his level of knowledge. The editors might have helped their audience by indicating their opinion about current orthopaedic texts.

The surgical trainee who buys this tome will have to read it at a desk or table either at home or in hospital, for the weight and size of the 1277 pages precludes easy transport and comfortable armchair reading. He will find the text easy to read and in the written part the authors have achieved their aim of obtaining a thoroughly modern look, untrammelled by tradition and reflecting contemporary surgical attitudes and priorities. When the trainee turns to the illustrations, however, he will be disappointed. Black and white illustrations are used throughout, and some of the pictorial figures are so inferior that imaginative interpretation of the legend is required to reinforce the poorly reproduced visual image. The ideal way to present clinical photographic information is in colour and with a book priced at £35 it is unfortunate that a way was not found to include some coloured illustrations. The figures are models of clarity and style. The standard of reproduction of radiographs is also variable and could be much improved if a subsequent edition is planned. Tables are highlighted as charts and are easy to follow but some are reproduced from elsewhere and their source is not always clearly identified. This will not help the studying trainee use his time efficiently.

There are acknowledged differences in surgical practice on either side of the Atlantic: what is acceptable in an assessment in North America may be of doubtful correctness in a British

fellowship examination. Little allowance is made for these variations in the text, and it is doubtful if the trainee's maturity and experience will be sufficient to enable him to make appropriate allowances. It is excellent to mix ideas between surgeons in Britain and North America but the trainee needs his own local route map before he adds embellishments.

Essential Surgical Practice achieves much of what was intended with respect to its written text and its editors are to be congratulated on the uniformity of style. The trainee at whom this book is aimed will, however, find the pictorial illustrations and radiographic reproductions very disappointing. I suspect that the assiduous trainee will invest his £35 elsewhere, probably dividing his money among other books that he can transport easily and peruse when a few minutes are available for study. The book contains too many deficiencies for it to be recommended to a library as an advanced bench book for undergraduate medical students.

J B BOURKE

Psychiatric genetics

Schizophrenia: the Epigenetic Puzzle. Irving I Gottesman and James Shields, with the assistance of Daniel R Hanson. (Pp 258; £18 hardback, £6.95 paperback.) Cambridge University Press. 1982.

The evidence that important genetic factors play a part in the development of schizophrenia is now so strong that it cannot be ignored or refuted even by the most ardent environmentalist. Nevertheless, the mode of transmission remains obscure, the schizophrenic genotype cannot be identified before the onset of illness, and the environmental influences that determine whether a genetically susceptible individual will develop the illness or not are still largely unknown.

Irving Gottesman, professor of psychiatric genetics at the Washington University School of Medicine in St Louis, and the late James Shields, reader in psychiatric genetics at the Institute of Psychiatry in London, have both made many important contributions to psychiatric genetics and have a long record of fruitful collaboration. This book is a fitting epitaph to their partnership, now terminated by Shields's untimely death. It provides an accurate, concise summary of the many twin, family, and adoption studies carried out in the past 70 years and a balanced analysis of their respective contributions to our present knowledge. The authors also discuss what is known of the environmental contribution, though, rather curiously, they make no mention of what is probably the most important clue of all, the excess of schizophrenic births in the three winter months. Nor have they anything to say about the suspected association between schizophrenia and creativity. They conclude that the observed distribution of schizophrenia in families and other relevant evidence is compatible with three fundamentally different models—namely, "distinct heterogeneity," implying that schizophrenia, like childhood blindness, is composed of a large number of qualitatively distinct disorders, most but not necessarily all transmitted by single genes; the "single major locus" model—for example, Slater's model in which most cases are heterozygotes but most heterozygotes remain unaffected—and a "multifactorial polygenic model," in which multiple genes of small effect interact with environmental stresses at different thresholds. Their own preference is for this multifactorial polygenic model, partly because of the much lower risk in first and particularly second degree relatives than in monozygotic twins and the observed distribution of cases in both maternal and paternal pedigrees, and partly because of the lack of evidence for any compensatory advantage in the close relatives of schizophrenics to explain the high morbid risk for schizophrenia in the general population.

Schizophrenia is the heartland of psychiatry and the elucidation

tion of its aetiology perhaps psychiatry's most important theoretical problem. The painstaking genetic studies described in this book constitute a major contribution to the solution to that problem. The authors' unrivalled knowledge of the publications on psychiatric genetics, their balanced judgment, and the clarity of their language have enabled them to provide a clear and scholarly account of present knowledge and the conclusions that may legitimately be drawn from this. They have also succeeded in conveying something of their own intellectual excitement while trying to tease out the "epigenetic puzzle" presented by that baffling disorder, schizophrenia, and their frustration at their inability, after so many years of research, to specify the type of genetic transmission this entails, or the environmental influences with which the unidentified genotype interacts.

R E KENDELL

Up to date studies of blood

Topical Reviews in Haematology. Vol 2. Ed S Roath. (Pp 222; £17.50.) Wright PSG. 1982.

The idea behind topical reviews of a subject like haematology, which is growing at different rates in many directions, is excellent, and to review only a few topics in each volume is admirable. Nevertheless, the risk of such a venture is that the most interesting and rapidly developing topics are used up in the first volume; there is some evidence that this has happened here. The format also poses difficulties: a series of essays is written in different styles and by writers with differing views on what is likely to be of absorbing interest and what mere detail to the reader. The difficulty is often in defining a target reader; in some chapters he should be a laboratory technologist, in others a biochemist, and in yet others a clinician.

In spite of these difficulties there is considerable merit in the idea of being able to keep up to date in subjects that are important yet not immediately relevant to the haematologist's laboratory or clinical practice. Each chapter is fully annotated with up to date references. Professor Askoy from Istanbul gives a fascinating and well written review of leukaemias, and possibly lymphomas, induced by benzene. The chapter highlights considerable variations in the incidence of different types of leukaemia between Turkey and Britain, but it obviously represents a vast amount of work and knowledge and will certainly be a reference article for years to come.

Dr Preston's article on platelets and prostaglandins is written so lucidly that I felt on top of the subject and was pleased to have such an easy, well illustrated source of reference. The next paper, by Bolhuis and Sixma on factor VIII/von Willebrand factor, was much more difficult to follow and would be of value mainly to those working in this narrow and difficult specialty of coagulation. Scully and Kakkar manage to present the difficult subject of chromogenic peptide substrates in a straightforward clear way, understandable to clinical workers.

I read with interest the title of the chapter by Rowden and his colleagues on plastic embedded specimens for evaluating bone marrow, but was disappointed by the mass of technical and historical detail and the paucity of actual clinical evaluation; much of the material might have been better placed in a technical manual. The other technical chapter, on cell separation, by Hester and Kellogg, is much more readable and gives useful rather than exhaustive practical clinical detail.

There are two chapters on white cell counts; the one by Hudson and Maxwell is on eosinophils and contains a considerable amount of detail on animal work, the relevance of which is not always clear; the other, by Jayaswal, uses imaginative and amusing illustrations to explain the difficult subject of inhibitory regulators of neutrophil chemotaxis.

These reviews are certainly a way of covering the broad topics

of a haematology. Volume 2 costs £17.50; I wonder how much it will cost trainee and trained haematologists to keep up to date.

AUDREY A DAWSON

Pioneer of mental health

... *In the Way of Understanding*. Priscilla Norman. (Pp 336; £10.) Foxbury Press. 1982.

Lady Norman, in her introduction, admits to writing on a subject distasteful to most people—the "strange thing called mental health." It was an inspiration to devote the first chapters to her own life, in which she describes her childhood dominated by a strongminded Irish nanny. She was, she says, a lonely child, who stuttered, had migraines once a week, and an inferiority complex. Like so many lonely children she lived in a dream world of her own and later comments on how much better life for the children of the aristocratic and privileged social classes would have been if only their parents had not shunned the help of child guidance.

Her adolescent years coincided with the first world war. She ran away from boarding school, thus displaying the "immediate action" which set a pattern for her lifelong method of dealing with difficult situations. During this war she caught glimpses of the lives of the underprivileged and acquired a taste for social work (called "do-gooding" in those days). She left Paris—where she lived in "ambassadorial grandeur"—and came to England and, on joining the Voluntary Aid Detachment, lost her headaches and was, for the first time, completely happy and satisfied. The futile world of the debutante did not suit her ("Why, oh why, was I so different?") and she craved a worthwhile job dealing with real people. The only way to lead a life of her own was through marriage, but this was sadly unsuccessful, with an incomplete companionship and a lack of intimacy of thought. She found the life she was expected to lead was not for her, so—soon after her second son, Peregrine, was born and after two years of separation—the marriage was ended. She then entered local government and was elected to the London County Council and the Chelsea Borough Council. Developing an interest in nursery schools she joined with Lady Reading and Madame Montessori to found training colleges. In 1927 she became immersed in child guidance—a function concerned with the emotional wellbeing of children, with the team approach as a basic principle. Here was the foundation of her subsequent life's work, from which she proceeded to the wider problem of mental health.

In 1930 she met Montague Norman, whom she married in 1933. Although he was much older than she was, they had a great deal in common and developed a deep friendship. He had an international mind and forceful views; he was intensely interested in her to the extent that she soon discovered he could not do without her. She gently distracted him from his busy life, made no demands on him, but was there when wanted; she acknowledged that he was a lonely man and needed her to occupy his free hours. Their houses were converted into warm and happy homes which they much enjoyed and for which she managed to take full responsibility; they were often alone together "talking in complete harmony about everything under the sun."

Her work in mental health continued. In the second world war she joined Lady Reading as a founder member of the Women's Voluntary Service (later Women's Royal Voluntary Service), helped in the evacuation of children to the country, had one of her houses converted into the Margaret McMillan Nursery School and another bombed; she saw the beginning of the Citizens Advice Bureaux, and, as chairman of the Mental Health Emergency Committee, learnt the facts about mental health, the

difference between mental illness and mental deficiency, and noted the advantages of professionals working with volunteer social workers. In 1944 her husband became critically ill and was forced to retire. After nine miserable months in Ramsay Lady Norman returned to an active life, became a Justice of the Peace and was shocked at the responsibilities she had to assume without any briefing or proper explanation. She found licensing committees "rather fun" and the domestic courts interesting; the wisdom and care of the juvenile courts, with their strict adherence to the law, won her admiration and she once again saw the benefits of teamwork.

By 1948 she was helping to develop the National Association for Mental Health internationally as well as nationally. The tragedy of her husband's death in 1950 distressed her greatly and she wrote a superb essay on loneliness which gives an insight into her deep sorrow. There was clearly no stopping her, however, for, after moving house in 1951, she began to serve as a member of the board of governors of the Bethlem Royal and the Maudsley Hospitals, on which she sat until 1975. As if this were all not enough, in 1958 she became a member of the South-east Metropolitan Regional Hospital Board, toured the region to learn about the job, found there was much going on that members did not know about and became chairman of a touring committee (the Norman circus). At this time she became interested in the care of the dying, particularly at St Christopher's Hospice, where she worked as a voluntary worker in the library and admired so much "total patient care."

The last hundred pages of this remarkable book concentrate on Lady Norman's world travels on behalf of the World Federation for Mental Health. There was hardly a country she did not visit, always listening and learning and bringing back ideas to her home country, particularly admiring the experiments in community care. I found particularly attractive her decision to press for smaller hospital buildings and her belief that "small is beautiful."

In her retirement (I refuse to say "old age": clearly she will never become old—and it takes a glance at *Who's Who* to convince one of her age!) she feels a loss of freedom and independence because she is without a car, but she finds television a boon. She is thankful to be alive to benefit from the miracles of science. No one profession, she thinks, can expect to care for this whole world of human frailty (and who would disagree). More research is needed, and unified action. Science and religion must overcome their antagonism. Leadership must come from those in authority but the ordinary people have a terrible responsibility.

No reviewer could do justice to this book or express adequately his admiration of the authoress. It deserves, and I hope will have, a wide readership.

RONALD GIBSON

In brief

Are you in any doubt about how to deal with camel bites or chewing gum on the eyelids? Do you know what to do when you inadvertently step into quicksand, lose your bearings in the desert, or get shipwrecked off Crusoe's island? Unless you can truthfully answer yes to these questions you would be well advised to look at *How to Survive Your Holiday*, by Dr C Allan Birch. This slim paperback, published by Wigmore House Publishing Ltd, costs £3.95, and is unquestionably a good read. It is also an informative guide for travellers, whether they contemplate a day trip to Bognor or an expedition to Everest. Guidance is given on the choice of a holiday and how to plan it, even down to the visas and what to do with your spare set of keys. Nonchalance about overseas travel is tempered with a reminder that "It is not entirely safe medically, and several unpleasant diseases may be encountered." True, and what is more you may even experience some before you reach your

destination—for example, motion sickness, phobias about flying, and traveller's ankle. (You are no doubt familiar with the dependant oedema peculiar to economy class travel, or is your salary too high?)

There is a pragmatic approach to common problems such as diarrhoea, minor accidents, and hangovers. The more challenging hazards inherent in virtually every activity whether it be driving, camping, climbing, or merely idling on the seashore, are discussed with sensible suggestions on how to avoid or cope with them. Dr Birch gives details on holiday insurance, vaccination requirements, and health care systems abroad, together with the addresses of specific organisations geared to inform on all aspects of health and travel. This frequently amusing book is aimed at the non-medical traveller contemplating a trip away from our windy shores, but many doctors and other health care workers will also find it well worth their perusal.

The centre for sickle cell disease attached to Howard University College of Medicine, Washington DC, conducts annual post-graduate conferences on sickle cell disease. *Advances in the Pathophysiology, Diagnosis, and Treatment of Sickle Cell Disease* (Alan R Liss, £17) is the proceedings of the 10th annual conference, held in September 1981. Contributions came predominantly from Howard University College of Medicine and Johns Hopkins University and included three presentations on prenatal diagnosis; four on transfusion programmes; three general review articles and one each on pain control, surgical treatment of leg ulceration, and evaluation of genetic counsellors; and an update on the pneumococcal vaccine. The lack of critical assessment of some treatments is regrettable, and it is difficult to evaluate a proposal for the surgery of leg ulcers without control observations or even a clear statement on duration of follow up or rate of recurrence. There are well documented reviews on prenatal diagnosis by restriction endonuclease analysis and on the current role of the 14-valent pneumococcal vaccine in inducing antibody response and conferring protection against pneumococcal infection. The four papers on transfusion treatment in sickle cell disease also form a useful "mini-symposium," covering techniques and indications for chronic transfusion regimens, the contribution of blood cell separators, and use of autotransfusion and of blood substitutes.

Little new data are presented, however, the subjects generally being given rather broad and superficial coverage, perhaps inevitable in a conference designed for health workers of diverse backgrounds.

Contributors

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