

but most of all the nuggets of wisdom he dispenses which make uncommon good sense. I disliked his poetic extravagance on the qualities he sees as desirable in a good group therapist; most of them must be pretty ordinary people.

Therapists with group experience will surely enjoy and be stimulated by this book. Parts will infuriate, but where better to fight an old friend than in a group?

JOHN A. HARRINGTON, *Consultant Psychiatrist and Medical Director, Uffculme Clinic, Birmingham*

**Abortion.** By MALCOLM POTTS, PETER DIGGORY and JOHN PEEL. London: Cambridge University Press. 1977. Pp 575. £17.50, £5.95 (paperback).

The title of this well-researched and documented book reflects the unemotional approach of its authors: a gynaecologist, a sociologist and a physiologist, working in birth control administration. Spontaneous abortion is covered adequately, and the remainder of the book is devoted to aspects of induced abortion, technical, epidemiological, demographic, legal and historical, in which a massive amount of data is presented in, on the whole, a readable way. I enjoyed the chapters on the nineteenth century and the illegal abortionist particularly.

The psychological sequelae of abortion are covered in 3½ pages, and there is a short section on the unwanted child; and whilst I agree that psychiatric morbidity is notable by its absence, I would have welcomed a review of the literature in the same depth as that dealing with the epidemiological data.

The demographic data are fascinating to read, and they convincingly support the hypothesis that liberalization of the abortion law transfers abortions from the illegal sector to the legal sector with consequent reduction in morbidity and mortality, and opportunity to improve contraceptive use. The Rumanian experience shows this clearly and is a chilling indictment of the way society is controlled by men in a way which disregards women, or merely sees them as pawns in an economic or political power struggle.

This book should be acquired by all medical and public libraries, and many doctors will wish to buy it for themselves to spend time absorbing some of the more complex arguments, such as the relationship between contraception and abortion.

WENDY D. SAVAGE, *Senior Lecturer, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, The London Hospital (Mile End)*

**The Premenstrual Syndrome and Progesterone Therapy.** By KATHARINA DALTON. London: William Heinemann Medical Books Limited. Pp 169. £5.50.

Those who suffer from the distressing symptoms of the premenstrual syndrome owe Dr Katharina Dalton a debt of gratitude for the research and writing through which she has informed those inside and outside the medical profession of this condition and the need for treatment. This concise, well-arranged book contains a comprehensive account of the syndrome based on the author's experience over 25 years. Readers will find the descriptions of the symptomatology of the syndrome, its effect on society, the family and other diseases of particular interest. There is a need for a much wider recognition of the effects of cyclical hormone changes and disturbances, but equally for caution that too much is not attributed to them.

The book also describes progesterone therapy and other conditions for which the author considers it appropriate. She advocates its use in recurrent abortion and toxæmia of pregnancy, although there is no valid scientific evidence to justify this and it encourages patients to seek or expect treatment at a time when physicians are rightly cautious about giving any therapy in the interests of foetal safety. A number of other topics are covered, some inadequately including adjustment of menstruation, dysmenorrhoea and the menopause.

The book is of value for the description of the syndrome and its relation to behaviour and disease but the inadequate presentation of therapy, much of it controversial, is unhelpful particularly as the book is intended for laymen and women whose expectations may be raised unjustifiably.

STUART STEELE, *Consultant Gynaecologist, Middlesex Hospital Medical School, London*

**Cocaine: Chemical, Biological, Clinical, Social and Treatment Aspects.** Edited by S. J. MULE. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications for C.R.C. Press. 1976. Pp 267. £46.00.

Cocaine is a powerful cerebral stimulant which gives rise to little physical dependence. It has been used since time immemorial to combat fatigue (the messengers of the Inca Empire are alleged to have depended upon coca leaf for endurance) and to arouse euphoric cerebral activity (the late Mr Sherlock Holmes is alleged to have resorted to it on occasion.) 'In its pharmacologic action, cocaine', to quote the authors of one of the sixteen chapters by 28 contributors which comprise this book, 'reinforces