



columns

retirement age and junior consultants cannot undertake private work for 7 years, what will happen? Many consultants are reluctant to undertake the court work and junior consultants will not be allowed to do so. Will the service depend on a bank of retired consultants? Is this desirable? Of course, some of the work can be managed in this way but it is not in the best interest of the children and families to have them mainly excluded from their CAMHS, and training specialist registrars will be more problematic.

The chapter dealing with the contributions child psychiatrists bring to court work is rich in quotations which show the diversity and commitment of colleagues and also demonstrate some arrogance. It is hard to pin down what we contribute but it is clear that we do and what we put in our reports is given considerable weight, particularly when considering risk, future placement and intervention. The book debates the use of a single expert, jointly instructed, or several experts who

meet and discuss as a multi-disciplinary team.

The clinical and legal agendas are discussed, how the two discourses coincide or diverge and the implications of this for the children and families. There is an interesting debate on whether the lawyers are changing clinical practice or the psychiatrists are educating the lawyers and the courts. For example, the 'facts' in a court report that lead to a diagnosis of emotional abuse. Is there a need for hard evidence or will soft evidence and clinical judgement be more useful in conveying the issues that need to be decided? This leads to a re-visitation of the value, or not, of the adversarial approval. All those interviewed valued the fact that their opinion was being discussed, debated and cross-examined, but then these consultants are doing court work and those unwilling to be questioned are not.

The book ends with the author's recognition that the family justice system

is now a multi-professional, multi-agency domain, and that changes in policy and practice evolve through a range of forums when issues are discussed, training initiatives are developed and future outcomes are monitored.

This is an interesting book, easy to read and an important text for child and adolescent psychiatrists, those in family court work, social workers, those involved in the Children and Families Court Advisory Service (CAFCASS), lawyers and CAMHS professionals. Julia Brophy highlights problems and concerns that need to be addressed if these children, young people and families are to have access to the service, support and interventions they need.

Judith Trowell Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Member of the President's Interdisciplinary Committee of the Family Division, Child and Family Department, The Tavistock Clinic

miscellany

John Snowdon, a Fellow of the College, was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2003 Australia Day Honours List

Lately chairman of the psychogeriatricians in the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, John Snowdon, trained at St Thomas's and the Maudsley. He is Director of Psychogeriatrics for Central Sydney and Associate Clinical Professor at Sydney University. Professor

Snowdon has worked in Australia for the past quarter of a century, playing a key part there in the development of psychiatric services for older people, and he writes widely on clinical and service research and policy. He is a frequent visitor to the UK.

forthcoming events

The **VIII European Conference on Traumatic Stress (ECOTS) 2003** will be held in Berlin, Germany on 22–25 May 2003. The European Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ESTSS) invites you to enjoy a wide-ranging scientific programme that offers the opportunity to enhance knowledge in the fields of extreme stress and psychotraumatology. All scientists and mental health professionals working with trauma, service personnel, non-governmental organisation-officers, voluntary agencies and lawyers are warmly welcome. For further details, please visit [\[conference-berlin.de\]\(http://www.trauma-conference-berlin.de\). Alternatively, please contact the conference organisers: Scientific Secretariat, VIII ECOTS Berlin 2003, c/o Catholic University of Applied Social Sciences, Koepenicker Allee 39–57, D-10318 Berlin \(tel: +493050 10 10 54; fax +493050 10 10 88\).](http://www.trauma-</p>
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Milton Keynes Primary Care Trust would like to announce that they are holding a one-day **Depression seminar/workshop** at the Postgraduate Centre on the Hospital Campus on Friday, 30 May 2003. The seminar/workshop is aimed at all members of community mental health

teams; general practitioners; counsellors; nurses; social workers; and all those who wish to gain a better understanding of what depression is, why it is on the increase and how to diagnose it. Practical help will be given to help break the patterns of depression, give new insights into the dissociative elements of depressed thinking styles and much more. For further information, please contact Jane Gurnett, Secretary, Psychotherapy Department, Milton Keynes PCT (tel: 01908 243 134; E-mail: gurnett.jane@mkc-tr.anglox.nhs.uk).