

than present them in a learned journal". "Nurses do not read such journals", was the rationale, and one wonders how that contributes to the frustrations and dissatisfactions so common in the profession and how the academic and intellectual potential of able nurses is realised.

This book is evidence that a contrary view has voice in the CPN profession at least. It is well written, well situated in a real practical world, and firmly based on research evidence which it reports cogently and coherently. It unashamedly claims a real place for CPNs in the development of new mental health services and does not waffle about sharing tasks and blurring boundaries with other disciplines. As such, the authors may have trodden on some toes, especially in Social Service departments!

However, it backs up its claim to an exciting future for CPN services by describing the role of the CPN from a wide variety of standpoints – individual case work, relationship with social networks, and service and organisational issues. It begins from the premise that socio-economic and other environmental factors are important to the development of mental ill health and sets the scene well for a readership inexperienced in these areas.

It is good to see a book by nurses and for nurses, which is prepared to embrace a wide range of mental health literature and interpret it so clearly. A must for all hospital libraries.

GILLIAN WALDRON, *Consultant Psychiatrist, Tower Hamlets Health Authority, London*

The Psychiatric Implications of Menstruation. Edited by JUDITH GOLD. Cambridge University Press. 1986. Pp 102. £15.00.

This fascinating little book, which forms a volume in the series *Progress in Psychiatry*, is made up of a series of short essays on the many aspects of menstruation and its disorders. The result is an immensely enjoyable book which is both informative and easy to read. The many contributors include psychiatrists, psychologists, and gynaecologists. The book begins with a valuable review of the many types of premenstrual depressions and discusses interactions that depressive illness can have in relation to menstruation. As a gynaecologist, I found this chapter of great value and I know that the discussion of this subject will be of great help to me in clinical practice. There follows a fascinating review by Ellisa Benedek of the use of premenstrual syndrome as a defence in law; this chapter includes descriptions of all cases where such a defence has been tested, both in the USA and in Britain.

The problem of stress in university students and its effect on menstruation is discussed, together with the role of examinations and athletics in the production of menstrual disorders.

Anorexia nervosa and its effects on menstruation is also included and the physical aspects of the problem are discussed, but I would have liked to have seen further discussions concerning the endocrine aspects of this disorder than were presented in this chapter.

A chapter entitled "Grief process after pregnancy loss", by Elizabeth Herz, was an extremely welcome inclusion as this section covered the problem of miscarriage and not stillbirth. Early pregnancy loss is rarely reviewed in standard textbooks, and such a good review of the subject was a pleasure to read. The book concludes with two chapters covering the psychological sequelae of infertility and the menopause. The latter reviews the many myths that abound concerning the end of menstruation and does much to sort fact from fiction in this subject.

Overall this is a useful little book from which I have learnt a great deal. It covers the interactive area between psychiatry and gynaecology, about which there is often little understanding and frequently much confusion. By reading this book I have become much better informed. I would recommend it most strongly not only to psychiatrists, at whom it is primarily aimed, but also to gynaecologists.

ANNE M. JEQUIER, *Senior Lecturer/Honorary Consultant in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham*

Premenstrual Syndrome: Current Findings and Future Directions. Edited by HOWARD J. OSOFSKY and SUSAN J. BLUEMENTHAL. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1986. Pp 95. £15.00.

The premenstrual syndrome is a difficult subject both to understand and to treat. Its aetiology is not defined, its pathophysiological basis is not understood, and therefore its treatment must, to some extent at least, only be empirical. Indeed, there are some who do not think that the syndrome even exists. However, there cannot be many gynaecologists who face the apparently increasingly frequent problem in the clinics that would agree.

This book, which forms a volume in the *Progress in Psychiatry* series, addresses the whole problem of the premenstrual syndrome and the result is a most informative and useful review. It begins with an overview of the affective disorders and their relationship to premenstrual depression. The close association between the two is described, and the interaction between depressive illness and the premenstrual syndrome outlined in a most helpful way.

There follows an interesting chapter concerning the biology of premenstrual changes, which consists of a careful review of the 'hard' evidence that hormonal changes induce premenstrual syndrome. It would appear that the monamine oxidases may be of great importance.

A chapter concerned with menstrually related mood

disorders includes useful methodology of visual analogue scales and other self-rating schemes. The authors also discuss in detail how premenstrual depression may be mimicked by many of the affective disorders that can occur episodically. The interaction between affective disorders and premenstrual depression is further explored. As a gynaecologist, I am sure that my management of patients who complain of menstrually-related depression will be considerably improved by my reading this chapter.

The evaluation of premenstrual syndrome, together with general advice on treatment of less severe forms of the disease, is clearly described in a good and well-balanced central chapter. The management of more severe forms of the syndrome is also fully reviewed, together with the treatment of any other co-existing psychiatric disease. It is pointed out that few controlled studies are available, and that there is scant evidence for the existence of any therapy of proven value for premenstrual disease. The volume concludes with a chapter concerned with cognitive approaches to the treatment of premenstrual depression and a chapter on research techniques used to study the premenstrual syndrome.

This is a very interesting and valuable little book. Although it is written exclusively by psychiatrists, it will be of considerable value to gynaecologists who probably see as much of this disorder as anyone. It was a pleasure to read such a concise and objective review of this difficult problem.

ANNE M. JEQUIER, *Senior Lecturer/Honorary Consultant in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham*

Masters of Madness: Social Origins of the American Psychiatric Profession. By CONSTANCE M. MCGOVERN. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England. 1986. Pp 262. £18.00.

Reading this book I experienced a strange feeling of déjà vu: it all seemed so familiar. And then it dawned on me that this was because the history of American psychiatry is essentially the history of English psychiatry told with an American accent.

The Association of Medical Officers of Asylums and Hospitals for the Insane was founded in England in 1841, whereas the American analogue, the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane (now the American Psychiatric Association), was founded three years later in 1844. The origins of these associations in both countries lay in the expressed wish of well-intentioned men to pool their experience with the earnest desire of improving the treatment of the insane.

There were differences in emphasis, of course, but the rise and the fall of the asylum systems in England and America ran roughly parallel courses, although it is in

the context of the demise that the closest approximation can be seen. What is most remarkable is the sharp division of opinion which has arisen in both countries as to the desirability of closing the mental hospitals.

This division could not be better illustrated than in the quotations given at the beginning of Chapter 7, which are the declared views of two Presidents of the American Psychiatric Association. In 1958, Harry C. Soloman opined, "I do not see how any reasonable objective view of our mental hospitals can fail to conclude that they are bankrupt beyond remedy . . . [they] should be liquidated as rapidly as can be done". However, in 1984 John A. Talbott had occasion to write, "Our public facilities are deteriorating physically, clinically, and economically: our chronically ill are either 'transinstitutionalised' to nursing homes or deinstitutionalised to our cities' streets".

It seems a pity that this most readable and informative book should be marred by occasional lapses in scholarship. For example, there is not and never has been a "British Association of Medical Officers of Lunatic Asylums". Again, the author alleges that at the trial of Daniel M'Naghten (*sic*) the court decided that a person was insane if he could not distinguish right from wrong. The court decided no such thing; the so-called right/wrong test was incorporated in the McNaughton Rules which were formulated after the trial.

HENRY R. ROLLIN, *Emeritus Consultant, Horton Hospital, Epsom*

What is Epilepsy? The Clinical and Scientific Basis of Epilepsy. Edited by M. R. TRIMBLE and E. H. REYNOLDS, Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. 1986. Pp 350. £40.00.

There have been many books on epilepsy in recent years, including several involving one or other of the editors of this book. It is easy to justify the production of these volumes on the basis that epilepsy is a common problem, but non-specialists may be forgiven for wondering whether there is really sufficient new information to require the use of so much paper. The present volume has arisen from the symposium which took place in July 1985, "To review the present state of knowledge and to discuss its relationship to the larger, central question; what is epilepsy?". The latter is a question of philosophical interest, but is not of much importance in clinical practice, in which an entirely empirical approach is taken to all such questions. This book has, in fact, much to commend it. It consists of 24 review chapters, each well-written and representing an authoritative view. Even hoary old classics such as the classification of seizure disorders make interesting reading. The scope of the book ranges from a historical introduction, through discussions of problems of epilepsy in children, differential diagnosis from other paroxysmal neurological disorders, EEG, seizure monitoring and depth electrode