

no mention of group, peer pressures, or therapeutic community, all of which can also help to share the load, arouse self-awareness, stimulate responsibility taking, and increase self-esteem.

J. STUART WHITELEY, *Consultant-Psychotherapist, Henderson Hospital, Surrey*

Reassessing Community Care. Edited by NIGEL MALIN. Beckenham: Croom Helm. 1986. 354 pp. £22.50.

As Community Physician at Hammersmith Hospital I used to pass Consultants, in the corridors, hurrying to their next ward round. "How is the community?" they would ask cheerily, but not await my reply. For psychiatrists who are hospital-bound but have time to open a book, Malin offers an answer, in this timely collection of essays on community mental health care. Much of the experience described is drawn from work with mentally handicapped people, but the ideas and proposals have contemporary relevance in a decade that may see the closure of several large mental illness hospitals. An authoritative essay by Val Reed on community nursing indicates the transition of community psychiatric nurses from 'medical handmaids' towards a greater autonomy in assessment and therapy. David Race gives a concise outline of normalisation theory, and Alan Tyne describes programmes for training in PASS, the detailed evaluation instrument derived from normalisation. Elsewhere there are useful descriptions of experience with group homes and rehabilitation projects. Nevertheless, in his opening chapter, Malin draws attention to the underlying structural problem of mental health care in Britain. Social services departments often have progressive ideas and would like to provide more community services, but the Government's policy of rate-capping Local Authorities directly inhibits these initiatives. Health Districts, on the other hand, often have considerable resources tied up in the large institutions, but there is professional resistance to change. Only a realignment of care philosophies between the two major services will overcome the impasse and refute the prophecy that community care is destined to fail.

MARK MCCARTHY, *Senior Lecturer in Community Medicine, University College Hospital, London*

Philosophical Medical Ethics. By RAANON GILLON. Chichester: John Wiley. 1985. 189 pp. £8.50.

In the past 30 years psychiatry has gone through something of a scientific revolution. It is no longer sufficient that we base our beliefs and management on intuition or experience. We are expected to defend our decisions, giving reasons and evidence for what we do.

Clinical practice is not simply a scientific enterprise; it is also a moral one. However, in general we are not

expected to bring the same sophistication and rigour in our thinking to our moral decisions as we are to our scientific ones. Gillon, a general practitioner and philosopher, challenges this. In his opinion we need to be equally critical in thinking about both aspects of clinical practice.

This book is made up of 26 essays which originally appeared in the *British Medical Journal*. Because together they form a coherent whole they are, I think, more successful as a book than they were in weekly instalments spread over half a year.

Gillon has successfully achieved his two aims. The first is to argue that doctors should take moral philosophy seriously. The second is to give an introduction to medical ethics. In less than 200 pages, a clear outline is given of moral philosophy. The reader is introduced not only to the central topics such as utilitarianism, rights, and justice, but also to many of the detailed issues, for example to the principle of double effect, to the distinction between acts and omissions, and to the doctrine of ordinary and extraordinary means. These various principles and ideas are brought to bear on several problems of medical ethics, including abortion, paternalism, confidentiality, and (of particular interest to psychiatrists) consent.

This is an exceptionally good introduction to medical ethics, which can be read with pleasure, a chapter a night for a month (with weekend off), or it will serve well as a basic text for a seminar course, with several weeks devoted to each essay.

R. A. HOPE, *Clinical Lecturer in Psychiatry, Oxford University*

Handbook of Psychiatric Drug Therapy. By STEVEN E. HYMAN and GEORGE W. ARANA. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. 1987. 173 pp. £12.95.

This is a well laid out paperback that aims to be a handbook of psychiatric drug treatment. It succeeds in its aims of being a useful introduction to psychopharmacology and of providing help in careful and effective drug prescription. At the end of each chapter a few recent references are provided, but these are not comprehensive reading.

The two-page introduction to psychopharmacology contains sensible principles to guide drug therapy in psychiatry (e.g. be sure to allow for a full trial of an adequate dose before changing treatment, keep the regimen simple). Chapters 2, 3, and 4 cover antipsychotics, antidepressants, and lithium respectively. Chapter 5 describes carbamazepine and other anticonvulsants used in psychiatry, while chapter 6 tackles the benzodiazepines. The final chapter is entitled "Other agents: psychostimulants, beta adrenergic blockers and clonidine". All the chapters use a similar format and cover chemistry, details on metabolism, blood levels, absorption and mechanisms of action of the drug, side-effects