

pation with the innate worth of independence of the individual, noble as that is, sustains a system which may permit neglect of the individual human being in his or her time of greatest need". Or, as we might say in our vernacular, why does the richest country in the world give such lousy health care to its poor?

The sessions had a standard pattern: short topic presentations by one speaker from each country, followed by an (edited) open discussion. Some of the participants were clinicians – psychiatry was represented by Sir Martin Roth, Professor John Corbett, and Professor Herbert Pardes. There were also contributions by community physicians and economists. Yet at the end, Mr Arthur Mahon, President of the Royal Society of Medicine Foundation Inc., New York, noted perceptively, "My guess is that few, if any, people at this meeting would trade their system for that of their colleagues on the other side of the Atlantic". So what was it all about?

Some financial notes. Glaxo paid for the book to be published, although it still costs £20.00 to buy it in paperback. The meeting was financed by 18 other drug companies and 3 American foundations. And finally, it is unlikely that any of the participants were among the 60 million people in the USA who are under-insured or uninsured for health care.

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Problem Behaviour in People with Severe Learning Disabilities: A Practical Guide to a Constructive Approach. By EWA ZARKOWSKA and JOHN CLEMENTS. London: Croom Helm. 1988. 208 pp. £10.95.

Today the emphasis is on community care, and 'problem behaviour', that new euphemism for an aspect of mental handicap which blights the lives of the possessor and those he lives with, has become challenging. This book, prescribing one remedy, lives up to the promises of its blurb: it is practical, broad in its approach, and addresses those who have to cope daily with a variety of difficult behaviour. The layout is sensibly staged and, where there is repetition, this aids the flow and digestion of ideas. Chapters are divided so that an introduction to general principles is followed by a series of clear steps putting these into practice. Well-designed and memorable flow charts help, as do the examples of record keeping (although it might be thought a little ambitious to suggest that staff spend time compiling pie charts).

It is a well-balanced book and is helpful in its comments on the team approach as well as on ethical issues. Included are such matters as who should attend meetings, their organisation, and what approach is reasonable and in what circumstances. Understandably, concern about consent is central; confidentiality passes unmentioned.

The book has a slightly self-conscious, socio-psychological style, but the clarity and comfort of the presentation make for a very readable guide. Not only is it suited to anyone entering the field of mental handicap, but it will also provide a valuable basis for those who teach.

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Explorations in Psychoneuroimmunology. Edited by RUTH LLOYD. Orlando, Florida: Grune & Stratton. 1987. 162 pp. \$34.50.

The idea that personal distress or adversity affects physical well-being is evident to most people. To demonstrate scientifically the links between such adversity or distress and physiochemical changes has long been a goal of psychosomatic-orientated research. The conceptual difficulties in such an enterprise are formidable, attested to by the lack of an emergent theory that could both generate enterprising research and give it direction. In many respects, much of the research in this area has generated more fine words than worthy findings.

Explorations in Psychoneuroimmunology attempts to draw together the fields of neurology/neuropsychiatry, immunology, and endocrinology and describe what the authors see as their common controlling mechanisms and interacting levels of communication. Implicit in this is the belief that there is a functional relationship between the central nervous system and the immune and endocrine systems. Support for this assumption includes the controlling effect of the hypothalamic-pituitary axis in the regulation and control of endocrine functions; the central effects of neurotransmitters and neuromodulators of hormones, thought previously to have effects solely in the periphery; the presence in lymphocytes of receptors for hormones; and the production by cell lines of the immune system of hormonal substances, some of which have central effects. Clearly there is indisputable evidence that suggests areas of overlap and mutual interaction of a high order of complexity between the central nervous system and the endocrine and immune systems.

The book is set out as a series of five seminars, covering the history of interdisciplinary research, an introduction to the immune system, interactions between the immune, endocrine, and central nervous systems, immunity in neuropsychiatric and neurological illness, and a short discussion of experiential effects on immunity. In an area of such enormous complexity one approaches a book such as this hoping for some degree of clarity, which unfortunately is not fulfilled. Too much is directed to long-winded speculations, and there is little in the way of constructive criticism of previous research. The reader is frequently intimidated by a complex and highly technical language which is confounded