

Section 4 concerns the special problems of treatment of the aged and of children. Although cautious, it suggests a continuing discrepancy in child psychiatry between practice in different countries, particularly on the subject of 'minimal brain dysfunction' and stimulant drugs.

The final section is of the widest interest, with discussion of topics such as placebo effects and their importance to the prestige of medicine, the impact that active drugs have made upon the care of the mentally ill, the areas of need for new drugs and the research methodology needed to identify them. A chapter on the relationship between psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy describes the defensive ways in which medicines may sometimes be prescribed or withheld, but the chapter fails, unfortunately, to provide a unifying model to link the two approaches.

Some will prefer a shorter book, but its scope is broad and it could be read through with profit by all psychiatrists in training. The final section has a wider appeal. It will be a reference book, useful for both theory and practice, to psychiatrists and others working in mental health.

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Children in Foster Care: Destitute, Neglected . . . Betrayed. By ALAN R. GRUBER. New York: Human Sciences Press. 1978. Pp 220. \$11.95.

This is an emotive title for a soberly factual book. Its 60 tables present a disquieting array of data on nearly 6,000 children who were living in foster homes in Massachusetts on a certain day in November 1971. It is a sad story of bureaucratic muddle and professional ineptitude. Foster parenthood can be a daunting task when the child is physically, mentally or emotionally handicapped; it becomes almost impossible when recruitment is as casual as the subsequent provision of supporting services. Adoption would have been a realistic goal for many of these children, of whom less than 30 per cent had seen their natural parents within the past six months, yet it was being actively pursued for only one child in six. And so on. The obstacles are partly legal and administrative, yet many social workers are handicapped as much by their limited experience of life as by heavy case loads.

For the child care specialist this rather dry account may be worth perusing. Other readers of the *Journal* would receive the same message even more cogently from a nation-wide study of British children in care, also conducted a few years ago but equally ineffective in promoting rapid change despite wide publicity at the time. Until the interests of the child can be

allowed to take genuine precedence, on either side of the Atlantic, there will be little chance to prevent these deprived children from becoming inadequate parents in their turn.

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The Heart Patient Recovers. By S. H. CROOG and S. LEVINE. New York: Human Sciences Press. Pp 432. \$14.95.

The psychogenic contributions to disability in physical illness have been relatively neglected by psychiatrists although they could be expected to have much to offer in improving routine care, in the treatment of psychosocial complications and in basic research. This book is therefore welcome. Drs Croog and Levine set out to describe the reactions of 345 patients to myocardial infarction and to test out a number of explanatory hypotheses. The project was of impressive complexity, with patients identified over two and a half years at 26 hospitals and requiring many collaborators concerned with organization or with interviewing. It has taken a further ten years to analyse the results which are now presented in this densely written book in which results and discussion are intermingled to the considerable confusion of the reader. One completes the demanding task with mixed feelings. It is satisfying that a single illness has been scrutinized in such rich detail and that attempts have been made to identify basic principles, but disappointing that the nature of the observations is such that relatively few clear conclusions are apparent. It is a book to stimulate thought and improve research methods rather than either a definitive study or a detailed review for clinicians (be they psychiatrists or cardiologists).

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Psychotherapy in Chronic Ulcerative Colitis. By AARON KARUSH, GEORGE E. DANIELS, CHARLES FLOOD and JOHN F. O'CONNOR. Eastbourne: Holt Saunders. 1977. Pp 148. £11.50.

This book deals with factors, or many of them, that influence success or failure of psychotherapy in ulcerative colitis.

The authors report a moderately favourable outcome of a trial in which 57 patients (Series B) who were treated by a 'more sophisticated group of psychotherapists' compared with 50 patients from an earlier study (Series A) whose psychotherapy was less