

Book Reviews

Adult Development: A New Dimension in Psychodynamic Theory and Practice. By CALVIN A. COLARUSSO and ROBERT A. NEMIROFF. New York: Plenum. 1981. Pp 290. \$22.50.

In 1932 Freud expressed the view that the therapeutic effectiveness of psychoanalysis would be adversely affected by the psychical rigidity present in the ageing patient. This view then underwent hierarchical promotion in the years that followed so that many considered psychoanalysis to be contraindicated in the ageing patient. However, what may have been overlooked was that Freud in the same lecture on the same issue said "All too often one seems to see that it is only the treatment's lack of the necessary motive force that prevents one from bringing change about".

In the last twenty years a number of psychoanalysts, Erikson and King among others, have made major contributions to our understanding and therefore to the treatment of the middle-aged and elderly patients.

It is therefore timely that Colarusso and Nemiroff offer a well written and easy to read book introducing and developing concepts of adult development and their application in psychotherapeutic practice. The authors propose that the nature of the developmental process is basically the same in the adult as in the child and continues as an ongoing dynamic process influenced by the adult as well as the childhood past. They also consider the importance of the body and physical change and finally the recognition and acceptance of the finiteness of time and the inevitability of personal death.

The authors offer a good selection of clinical material to illustrate the applications of their concepts. As a minor criticism, it might be said that the older age range was a bit neglected insofar as only two case studies of patients over the age of fifty were presented.

This book will be without doubt a useful addition to the libraries of those psychotherapists who are considering, or are concerned with, the treatment of the older patient.

JAMES D. TEMPLETON, *Consultant Psychotherapist, Southern General Hospital, Glasgow*

Revision Notes on Psychiatry (2nd edition). By K. T. KOSHY. Sevenoaks: Hodder & Stoughton. 1981. Pp 241. £3.65.

Sixty-three chapters in 235 small pages may fulfil the aim of *Revision Notes*, but in practice read more like an extended glossary. This impression is heightened by the alphabetical arrangement of the chapters, the consequent lack of coherent plan and the idiosyncratic choice of topics. The weight given to different subjects is surprising; for example, "Child Psychiatry" is three and a half pages long, only half a page more than "Anaemia in Mental Disorder". It is very difficult to write a short psychiatric textbook without over-condensing material to the point of inaccuracy; I think there are several places where the author has failed to avoid this trap. The foreword suggests that it is a useful text for students of many disciplines including medicine and clinical psychology, but it is written almost entirely from a nursing standpoint and as such is unsuitable for medical students. It would be helpful if the title clarified this point.

GILLIAN WALDRON, *Lecturer in Psychiatry, The London Hospital Medical College*

Prevention and Treatment of Depression. Edited by THOMAS A. BAN, RENE GONZALEZ, ASSEN S. JABLENSKY, NORMAN A. SARTORIUS and FELIX E. VARTANIAN. Lancaster, Lancs: MTP Press. 1981. Pp 300. £19.50.

This volume consists of a series of 31 papers which were presented by authors from 19 different countries at a Symposium on the Prevention and Treatment of Depression organized by the W.H.O. Only one contribution came from the U.K. and for the English reader some contributions will be much more meaningful than others. Inevitably the standard of the papers varies greatly, with significantly better contributions in the sections dealing with Classification, Nosology and Epidemiology. An undoubted spur to the conference was the 9th edition of the *International Classification of Diseases (ICD-9)* and the 3rd edition of the *Diagnostic Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM-III)* reflecting a change of emphasis in the United States towards a nosological

approach to classification of depression and its epidemiological investigation. Expectations for combating depression seemed to the reviewer to be somewhat naive in the light of the almost negligible psychiatric manpower in the underdeveloped countries. Pharmacological assessment and investigations are still in an embryonic stage and treatment, despite the development of drugs, largely empirical.

There is advantage in the new classifications for epidemiological studies. Amongst the interesting concepts expressed were cultural differences in depressive content with less guilt and conscience in the African countries and underprivileged groups. One surprising feature was a paper from Japan which finds that patients on maintenance therapy showed a higher rate of relapse and a great impairment of social adjustment than those without maintenance therapy during the 5 year period of follow-up. The assessment, however, was not a prospective study and distribution, which was not a random distribution, may have weighted the maintenance group with severe cases.

On the whole the book is an interesting collection of papers with potential for better identification and classification of depression but with over-optimistic expectation for success in the scene of prevention and treatment. The very good bibliography following each chapter in itself makes the book worth purchasing for library use.

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Stressful Life Events and their Contexts. Edited by **BARBARA SNELL DOHRENWEND**. New York: Neale Watson Academic Publications. 1981. Pp 287. \$12.95.

With this publication life events research comes of age. The honeymoon period of naively attempting to link external happenings and psychosocial disruption or breakdown is over, and this book, which includes contributions by many experts in the field, explains why. What is an event? How should events be defined? Can they validly be measured by a simple scale such as that associated with Rahe, or do they need the complex interview-rating methodology developed by G. W. Brown? How valid and reliable are peoples' memories of events of the previous year?

In several chapters the person to whom the events happen is considered. Lazarus thoughtfully dissects the concept of 'denial'; Lefcourt shows the relevance of locus of control theory. The tenuous conceptual base and shaky psychometric validation of the Type A, coronary-prone personality comes as a revelation. Surely a case of the personality industry conning the hypochondriacal American public?

Social factors that may render an individual susceptible to, or protect him from, the impact of an event are discussed. Social support networks seem particularly relevant.

This book is clear, incisive and constructively critical. It provides essential reading for the potential research worker in this field.

SIDNEY CROWN, *Consultant Psychiatrist, The London Hospital (Whitechapel)*

Death and Dying: A Quality of Life. Edited by **PATRICIA F. PEGG** and **ERNO METZE**. London: Pitman Books. 1981. Pp 190. £15.00.

This collection of papers covers a wider range of topics than its title suggests and some of them will be of great value to those working directly in the fields they cover and also to the liaison psychiatrist and social worker. Obstetricians and paediatricians will appreciate a group of papers on stillbirths and cot deaths: and one on perinatal death, which also contains a sensitive appraisal of the meaning of the funeral, which is largely applicable to all age groups.

A stimulating paper on coronary care shows through case material how the family, and especially the spouse, should be included in treatment and rehabilitation. Two papers on bereavement add to our knowledge of the subject. One emphasises the importance of self control as well as catharsis in grief. Other topics well covered include staff training and support, techniques for overcoming ill effects of the fear of recurrence and death in malignant disease, and some aspects of bereavement counselling.

Few will buy this book for themselves, because of its cost, but many should have access to it in a library.

AVERIL STEDEFORD, *Senior Registrar in Psychotherapy, The Warneford Hospital and Sir Michael Sobell House, Oxford*

Psychotherapeutic Treatment of Cancer Patients. Edited by **JANE GOLDBERG**. New York: The Free Press. 1981. Pp 364. \$25.00.

Most of the 20 contributors to this book are psychologists or psychoanalysts in private practice in North America. Despite the title, much of it concerns the role of psychosomatic factors in the aetiology of cancer. Some well-known theories, such as the 'cancer prone personality' who exhibits 'pathological niceness' and cannot express anger, and the excess of depression and stressful life events as precursors of cancer, are discussed but there is little attempt to evaluate the evidence for them. There is other highly speculative material, for example a cyst on a young man's neck is described in turn as a fantasised foetus and as a castrated testicle, and its removal as symbolic