

It is refreshingly unusual these days to be sent a single author book to review. Even in a scholarly and scientific work such as this, the reader can gauge something of the man behind the words. Giaquinto emerges from these pages as widely read in arts and science, a humane man committed equally to research and to improving the welfare of elderly people. I should be happy to be his patient were the need to arise.

ROBIN JACOBY, *Consultant Psychiatrist, The Maudsley Hospital, London*

The New Harvard Guide to Psychiatry. Edited by ARMAND M. NICHOLI Jr. London: Harvard University Press. 1988. 865 pp. £31.95.

This volume is the successor, 10 years on, to the highly respected *Harvard Guide to Modern Psychiatry*. It is a compendium of 36 complementary review articles of aspects of modern psychiatry by 42 distinguished contributors from or connected with the Harvard Medical School. The information that these were selected from 1800 members of the Harvard Psychiatric Department arouses a certain envy.

The contents are divided into six parts. Part 1, 'Examination and evaluation', deals with the assessment of patients and the classification of their disordered mental states. Noteworthy chapters here are 'The therapist-patient relationship' (Nicholi) and 'Classification and DSM-III-R' (Klerman). It is a sign of the times that the former devotes so much space to sexual relationships.

Part 2, 'Brain and behaviour', contains four weighty chapters by acknowledged experts: Mesulam on neuropsychiatry; Green, Money & Schildkraut on the biochemistry of affective disorders; Kety & Matthysse on genetic and biochemical aspects of schizophrenia; and Hartmann on sleep.

Part 3, 'Psychopathology', covers the usual textbook syndromes but with some additional chapters on less common topics such as 'Theories of personality' (Meissner) and eating disorders (Herzog). Chapters on defence mechanisms (Vaillant) and 'The psychodynamic basis of psychopathology' (Nemiah) emphasise the eclectic tone of the book.

Part 4, on principles of treatment and management, covers the whole spectrum from the psychotherapies through behaviour therapy, sex therapy, and chemotherapy to ECT, but not as far as psychosurgery. A final chapter on patient management (Sifneos & Greenberg) provides valuable insight into the tricks of the trade of clinical psychiatry.

Part 5, 'Special Populations', covers some important but neglected areas of clinical practice, including 'The person with chronic mental illness' (Gudeman) and 'The person confronting death' (Cassem). Both provide a rich source of advice, based on long experience, on how to manage these difficult situations, and it is gratifying to

find the needs of patients' families receiving due attention. This section places the guide in a class of its own, beyond the average textbook.

Part 6, 'Psychiatry and society', deals with epidemiology (Tsuang, Tohen & Murphy), community psychiatry (Borus), and 'Psychiatry and the law' (Stone). The legal chapter is naturally concerned with the American experience, but the principles are universal.

This is an excellent volume, best suited for browsing and reference purposes. Each chapter is comprehensive and up-to-date, fully referenced, and with suggested additional reading. The style is lucid and refreshingly jargon-free, and there is a notable absence of the fashionable but destructive polarisation of the dynamic and the biological. The prevailing theme is one of scholarship in the service of clinical practice, with patients' needs at the centre of attention. It will be a useful addition to all libraries, and many individuals will also appreciate its excellent value for money.

From one stable perhaps, but a stable of thoroughbreds!

KENNETH DAVISON, *Consultant Psychiatrist, Newcastle General Hospital; Lecturer, Department of Psychiatry, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*

Beginning Child Psychiatry. Edited by PAUL L. ADAMS and IVAN FRAS. New York: Brunner/Mazel. 1988. 620 pp. \$50.00.

What should a book for beginners be like? This one starts with a chapter on interviewing and examination, outlines the major treatment options, and goes on to describe all the childhood psychiatric disorders in DSM-III-R one chapter at a time. Sections on the child as a family member, being victimised, emergencies, and professional issues complete the book. As an appendix, there is an interesting chronology of child psychiatry going back to 5000 BC! The authors have chosen to present their own clinical practice rather than review the literature (although key references are cited). This makes for a clear and coherent view of child psychiatry, albeit as practised by the authors, which, together with numerous case examples and an easy to read style, will make the book readily accessible to beginners and give them a feel for the subject.

This would be all very well in a slim, introductory volume, but this book is over 600 pages long. In choosing to go for a coherent view of clinical practice the authors have, I believe, missed opportunities to cover certain areas in more detail and glossed over other areas of controversy. This need not have been necessary in a book of such length. The lack of a separate section on aetiology means that it is discussed briefly and often repetitively in each chapter. The complex interactions between constitutional, family, and environmental factors are not given a full airing. The chapter on

interviewing omits all mention of the assessment of family functioning.

This is also a very American book, and British beginners would get a false impression of current treatment methods, particularly with respect to the use of medication, on the other side of the Atlantic. In conclusion, I would not recommend this book to British beginners in child psychiatry, although I suspect it may prove popular in its country of origin.

DAVID COTTRELL, *Senior Lecturer in Child Psychiatry, Department of Child Psychiatry, The London Hospital*

Old Loyalties, New Ties: Therapeutic Strategies with Stepfamilies. By EMILY VISHNER and JOHN KILNER. New York: Brunner/Mazel. 1988. 272 pp. \$27.50.

This book updates and expands earlier work by the same authors. It gives a detailed account of the different phases of life in stepfamilies as these are likely to be brought to the attention of clinicians. It offers a variety of useful ways of looking at the structure of stepfamilies, the complexity of stepfamily relationships, and the emotional issues that underlie presenting problems. A number of useful diagrams are included for mapping the way in which stepfamilies and biological families connect in relation to different aspects of children's lives.

The book contains a good reference list and would be of value as a guide to stepfamily life for anyone who works with a general range of families. It is overlong, and contains many case studies which in an English setting would be unlikely to receive professional attention. It lacks case studies of any severe pathology, such as sexual abuse or persistent violence, focusing instead on the broad issues affecting stepfamilies as a whole.

As children in stepfamilies are over-represented in the population presenting to mental health settings in Britain, it is important that the organisation of stepfamily life and the features that distinguish stepfamilies from biological families become a familiar part of professional thinking. This book makes an important contribution to the development of this knowledge.

GILL GORELL BARNES, *Director for Training, Institute of Family Therapy, London*

Stress – The Challenge to Christian Caring. By GAUIS DAVIES. London: Kingsway Publications. 1988. 286 pp. £6.95.

The general aim of this book would appear to be to introduce the Christian to the real, and theologically acceptable, benefits of medical help, and especially of psychiatric treatment. It is addressed to those who might feel that putting their faith in the psychiatrist and medication in the face of emotional stress and turmoil

amounts to a denial of their faith in God. At the same time, the author tries carefully to respect and give full acknowledgement to the place of Christian faith in the face of the stress which is part of our human lot. The book illustrates some of the difficulties in trying to be fair to both sides, and thus leaves itself open to criticism on both sides.

Some Christians may not feel that the work is sufficiently theological in the way in which it relies heavily on the quotation of a number of selected texts. On the other hand, some psychotherapists would feel that the unconscious has not really been given its due and that psychotherapy or counselling has been dealt with in a somewhat superficial manner. Thus, in the first instance, while extolling the need for preaching as a preventive of stress it omits the fact that while there is only one sermon being preached, there are really as many sermons heard as there are people in the Church. In the second instance, what is said about therapy would appear to be linked more with behavioural therapy and learning theory than with dynamic analytical psychotherapy.

In spite of these failings, this easily readable work is a real and positive apologia which may enable many fundamental Christians to seek appropriate help in times of pathological stress.

LOUIS MARTEAU, *Director, Dymna Centre, London*

MCQs and Short Notes in Psychiatry. By ALISTAIR S. BURNS, ANTHONY S. DAVID and MICHAEL FARRELL. London: Wright. 1988. 142 pp. £6.95.

MCQs for Psychiatric Studies. By CHRIS FREEMAN. London: Churchill Livingstone. 1988. 162 pp. £6.95.

There is seemingly an inexhaustible demand for multiple choice question (MCQ) books among psychiatric trainees preparing for Parts I and II of the Membership examination. These are two new additions to the fold to feed the anxiety of potential candidates.

MCQs and Short Notes in Psychiatry contains 180 MCQs with explanatory notes, together with 20 examples of the new-style short questions plus model answers. The latter seem useful and well constructed for revision purposes, but I found the MCQs to be at times rather too obscure or pedantic for the trainee. Many appeared to relate to the small print found in some of our more weighty tomes, and I could not help wondering if this was a result of all three authors having worked at the Institute of Psychiatry or the Maudsley Hospital.

MCQs for Psychiatric Studies begins with an excellent section offering advice on examination technique, which will be appreciated by many readers. However, the vast majority of the ensuing example questions and explanatory notes are for use in close conjunction with *Companion to Psychiatric Studies*, and this means that many bear little resemblance in style to typical