

The topic itself is clearly important, in view of the frequent responsibility for consultancy in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the book's appearance reminds one of this important function about which too little has so far been written. The Editors decision to keep the book free of consultation theory is a mistake, as invaluable as detailed descriptive accounts of consultation may be, this is the first step to defining general principles and guidelines of relevance to a wide variety of settings. There are a number of interesting and well-written chapters, either describing the pitfalls and advice, or offering well-organised reviews of the field (e.g. on divorce consultation; consultation to paediatric wards). However, paediatric consultation is dealt with in only 34 pages (covering 2 chapters); consultation in child abuse is poorly dealt with, and there is a notable absence of consultation with community-based social welfare units and residential homes. Too many chapters disappoint, either too anecdotal (e.g. on adolescents), poorly organised (on out-patient liaison), or written with little depth (e.g. rural clinic work, teacher and classroom consultation, and child abuse). Some chapters are simply not relevant to the book's title (e.g. on depressed children, and on family assessment), whilst others are concerned with specialised projects of little relevance to the UK.

The book therefore cannot be recommended for purchase by the general reader, and in view of its cost most library committees would probably choose not to select.

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Depression: Concepts, Controversies, and Some New Facts. Second Edition. By EUGENE E. LEVITT, BERNARD LUBIN and JAMES M. BROOKS. London: Laurence Erlbaum. 1983. Pp 249. £19.95.

This readable monograph contains four sections. Firstly the authors provide a balanced review of the concept and classification of depression. Secondly they succinctly summarise the behavioural, social and cognitive aetiological theories of Seligman, Lewinsohn, Hokanson, Brown and Beck. Whereas the former section identifies the limitations of the "endogenous/reactive" dichotomy, the latter (without any apparent sense of irony) focuses solely on the reactive depressions. These are well referenced sections.

The third section contains "some new facts" of the title. It is a report of the first national epidemiological study of the affective state of 3,000

randomly selected U.S. citizens. The instrument used was Lubin's Depression Adjective Check List, originally derived from "marked or severely depressed" patients and validated in samples of normal people, and in depressed and non-depressed patients. The authors do not state when the study was carried out nor how the demographic characteristics of their sample compare with those of the U.S. population.

The scores were related to a number of social and demographic variables. It was found that "depression is a social class phenomenon" and that "it is represented by an axis that runs from inferior educational attainment to lower annual income to failure to advance financially". They infer that "education is a better predictor of depression-proneness than other social class subfactors". However, demographic factors account for less than 6% of the variance of the scores. This suggests that the aetiology of depression is "largely invested in personality factors".

The authors then attempt to integrate the study findings with the reviewed non-biological theories of depression and to achieve a synthesis. They imply, for example, that a person from a lower social group may not only be more exposed to depressing influences but also lacks "control" (Seligman) over these and the necessary "social skills" (Lewinsohn) to cope. The result is that depressive behaviours are elicited and reinforced. This section is the most hypothetical and least satisfactory

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The Battered Woman Syndrome. By LENORE E. WALKER. New York: Springer Publishing. 1984. Pp 256. \$21.95

This account of a study of approximately 400 self identified battered women contains much fascinating information, but is intensely irritating to read in places. The study was organised as a feminist project with the object of "integrating the feminist perspective into a knowledge base replete with the inevitable bias of a male-dominated field of study". This approach intrudes inappropriately at times in the presentation and discussion of the work.

Much historical information was obtained from the subjects and a variety of psychological assessments made. There is an excellent account of both the practical and emotional problems involved in this type of study. The book contains a very useful discussion of legal issues in relation to domestic