

example, antisocial behaviour is covered in some detail, school refusal and sexual misbehaviour are treated rather superficially, obesity has a short paragraph, and anorexia nervosa is not mentioned.

One of the most useful features of the book is the extensive bibliography at the end of each chapter. Many of the references will be familiar to child psychiatrists. Apart from the editors, who are (or were) both clinical psychologists at the Institute of Psychiatry, the other contributors are not identified except by surname and initials at the beginning of each chapter. This is irritating for the reader, and seems a discourteous omission.

Although this is an attractively produced hardback book, I do not think the cost is justified by the contents, and would doubt that many trainees would wish to buy a copy.

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Problems of Pre-School Children. Edited by NAOMI RICHMAN and RICHARD LANSDOWN. Chichester: John Wiley. 1988. 243 pp. £19.95 (hb), £7.95 (pb).

It takes a certain command of one's subject and confidence in one's ability to communicate it to be able to write and edit a book such as this that discusses the problems of pre-school children clearly, accessibly, and without recourse to jargon. The text is aimed at a wide audience of carers and professionals who work with young children. It makes no assumptions of prior knowledge of children's development or psychology.

The editors emphasise two main themes – firstly that early childhood is a time of adaptation and change, and secondly that all behaviour results from an interaction between the child and the effective social environment. The chapters are written by the editors and close colleagues from the Hospital for Sick Children in Great Ormond Street, and this, together with their careful editing, lends a coherence to the text.

In the first three chapters, Richman looks in turn at the stresses in families that may lead to problems in children, at the myriad of changes in society (such as lack of day care facilities in affluent Britain) that place stress on families, and at recent research on early social relationships. All this is done with great compassion and feeling for the needs of the child in his or her environment. Graham summarises genetic and physical influences on development whose action must be understood even when interventions are environmental.

Lansdown then follows with three chapters over-viewing language development, the clumsy child, and learning difficulties. In the latter, he discusses both mental handicap and specific learning difficulties, and it might have been better to separate the two topics. A sensible discussion on child abuse – both physical and sexual – is followed by a superb chapter by Richman in which she provides an overview of behavioural and

emotional problems. Douglas then covers behavioural management of common problems in a deceptively clear way, covering many topics and giving good advice that is clearly informed by clinical practice.

Jenkins & Milla provide a good example of how detailed understanding of mechanisms helps clinical practice. They summarise the development of feeding as a prelude to discussing failure to thrive, although the chapter covers all eating disorders. McGuire provides a less satisfactory discussion of gender differences, arguing, unsuccessfully from my point of view, that most are environmentally determined. Feminist perspectives are not necessarily scientific ones. Her chapter on child care away from the family poses interesting challenges to widely held beliefs about day care but, surprisingly, she does not discuss fostering or adoption.

The book finishes with a chapter on the functions and values of play (Richman & Dawe) and on the law as it appears to children (Bieber & Taylor). The latter will be helpful for my clinicians so it is unfortunate that it does not point out the duty placed on NHS professionals by the 1981 Education Act to inform LEAs whenever they suspect that a child may have special educational needs. Working with pre-school children, this must be a common occurrence.

This book admirably attains its objectives. It places the problems of pre-school children in a social context and draws on up-to-date research findings to clarify the mechanisms whereby problems develop. The simple, direct style of writing, with appropriate summary charts and no references in the text, will make it accessible to many carers, and thereby can only improve the wellbeing of pre-school children.

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Interprofessional Consultation. By DEREK STEINBERG. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific. 1989. 134 pp. £15.95.

Steinberg's short, clear and well-written book describes the principles of consultation between professionals, which he distinguishes from consultation with patients, referred to as "clinical consultation". The author is a specialist in adolescent psychiatry, and many of his illustrations are taken from his own experience. However, he is careful to discuss consultation in other settings, and his examples cover a wide range of general and psychiatric hospital community settings. Theory is succinctly summarised, and the book is principally concerned with the practical issues of how to carry out consultation and how to avoid and to deal with problems.

The most important chapters are those that describe the basic principles of consultation and a model for practical work. The former examines when consultation is useful, who should be involved, and what areas of work may be covered. This concludes that "the aim is to help the consultees stand back from the task and, less