

## Reviews

Joel T. Rosenthal, *Old Age in Late Medieval England*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1996, 260 pp., £37.95, ISBN 0 812 23355 7.

This book seems to be an attempt at a social history of late medieval old age, rejecting a demographic approach, although ‘soft demography’ is precisely the focus of the first chapters. In the final chapter Rosenthal writes, ‘no overall survey of medieval views about old age, or of the stages of life, or of the life of the elderly, will be attempted’, leaving little sense of what Rosenthal is trying to do. Most of the book is a methodological consideration of different sources in which age, particularly old age, are at the centre of attention, or from which such topics as grandparenthood might be reconstructed. All too often, however, an interesting question posed (the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren, and grandparents as ‘bonding agents for the family’) is either not answered or answered only basically (there were quite a lot of old people, some of them were active into their sixties and seventies, while others sought to retire).

The sources used pertain to the well-off, to the propertied and to an almost exclusively male world. Rosenthal acknowledges the evidence of the more frequent survival of grandmothers than grandfathers, but their experience is glimpsed only tangentially. This is really a book about wealthy old men. The poor figure not at all and women only occasionally. Rosenthal is thus unable to explore the ways in which old age might have different meanings according to gender and status. While old men of the gentry and even substantial peasantry might have, as Rosenthal suggests, an important status in the community as transmitters of memory and culture, the implicitly different status of their elderly people is not explored. His assertions that hospitals made no special provision for old people ignores the evidence that many almshouses founded in the fifteenth century (the period primarily under discussion) were for the aged. He does not discuss Marjorie MacIntosh’s 1988 article on the topic, though it is cited in the bibliography. The possibility that the fifteenth century brought a new and distinctive attitude to the elderly poor is not addressed.

Rosenthal does demonstrate that the experience of old age, at least for the privileged, was very different from that which the literary conventions of the age might lead the reader to expect. Caxton when aged 50 years might write of age creeping on and enfeebling his body, and Erasmus might (at 40) expect to die by 50, but Rosenthal gives us John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, who was killed on the battlefield at 66 (and thought to be 80), and Edmund Audley, a bishop for 44 years, 60 years a serving cleric, and who therefore must have been 80 or more at his death. Joel Rosenthal is a distinguished medievalist but this is not his best book.

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Karen A. Roberto (ed.), *Relationships between Women in Later Life*, Harrington Park, Binghamton, New York, 1996, 198 pp., \$14.95, ISBN 1 560 23091 6.

This collection, previously published as *Journal of Women and Aging* (volume 8, numbers 3/4), is organised in two overlapping parts, each addressing the supportive qualities of older women's relationships. The first section examines what are described as more traditional types of relationship: between mothers and daughters (Blieszner, Usita and Mancini), grandmothers and granddaughters (Kivett), siblings (Pearson Scott), friends (Roberto) and lesbian partners (Shenk and Fullmer). In the second and more interesting section, the focus shifts to relationships that have hitherto received little attention: Catholic Sisters (Mecier, Shelley II, Powers), female farm workers (Turner), older women in therapeutic groups (Cox and Parsons), old women and their legal guardians (Wacker and Keith), and women living in retirement communities (Perkinson and Rockemann) and nursing homes (Powers). Each chapter presents findings from an empirical study, grounded in theory, and draws out the implications for research and practice. A range of research approaches is employed, from large-scale statistical work to ethnographic and small-scale evaluative research, and the case-study method.

The first three chapters, on family relationships, are interesting though not revelatory. The chapter on long-term lesbian partnerships in rural settings makes the point, again familiar, that cultural constructions of sexuality and partnership determine the way that individuals conceptualise and describe their experience. In terms of professional practice, the implications of all the chapters in the first section are similar: an enhanced understanding of the dynamics of these relationships or, in the case of older rural lesbians, of the lack of cultural validation of experience, leads to more sensitive intervention. Educational interventions in the form of discussion and support groups might promote understanding and reciprocal help between mothers and daughters. The potential for care and support can usefully be encouraged across the generations. Sustaining sibling contact might facilitate reminiscence processes and the resolution of losses. Some of these recommendations for practice seemed somewhat banal, but are required by the format of the book.

The linking of theory, research and practice works much better in the second half, where the material on offer generally has direct relevance to current social-work practice. The chapter on empowering old women through group work is particularly interesting, containing a clear working definition of empowerment, and statements of the goals of intervention and how they might be achieved. The study of groups in action shows that in addition to the expected empowerment outcomes, the older women participants develop sustaining relationships with each other and often seriously consider the nature of their relationships outside the group. The chapter on elderly female farm-workers is challenging in a different way, undermining some popular preconceptions about ageing in rural areas. Female farm-owners are increasing in number and tend to be older than male. Unlike them, the women tend not to have additional paid employment away from the farm, although their farms are smaller. Most are widowed or have never married. In old age they tend

to reject informal help at home, but neither would they consider moving to live next to a child. The support options facing this increasing group are few. The research on Catholic Sisters offers less for practice but is fascinating as an account of sources of self-esteem in religious communities. These women are best viewed as following a particular career. Their perceptions of themselves as women, and as friends, relatives and workers, appears to influence self-esteem more than does religious belief. The last two chapters are worthy of comment, and challenge other writing on friendship networks in institutional settings.

The main justification for the book is that relationships and themes of interconnectedness are fundamental to women's lives and that men are different in that respect. This is generally an unstated premise, based on early research on gender and the statements of feminist writers like Betty Friedan. It is left to the last contributor to offer evidence of the greater importance of relationships to women by comparing the experience of male and female nursing home residents. In general the book is well constructed and surprisingly coherent, given its origins. This is a useful addition to the literature on older women's relationships. Every chapter offers information of interest to researchers though specialists in the field of relationships and gender might find some of the material familiar. The research reports will be valuable to practitioners wanting to broaden their understanding of old women in particular circumstances. They might also find guidelines for action in chapters like the one on empowerment and those on ageing in institutional settings.

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DOROTHY JERROME

Carol Ann Strauss, *Grandparents: An Annotated Bibliography on Roles, Rights and Relationships*, Scarecrow, Lanham, Maryland, 1996, 496 pp., £79.80, ISBN 0 810 83135 X.

I had thought of grandparents as an important but neglected theme until this massive bibliography of over a thousand items, compiled by an American reference librarian, refused to squeeze through my letterbox. There are very few European references indeed, but for those interested in North American family relationships there is an abundance of information, including summaries of two hundred legal cases. The text consists of tightly worded abstracts, so it is for consultation rather than for reading, and it is well organised thematically: beginning with general perceptions of the roles of grandmothers and grandfathers, followed by a section on grandparenting in ethnic minority families; then the relationship between grandparents and their adult children, and the changing patterns of mutual aid as grandchildren are born and the grandparents age; and then finally a focus on grandparent-grandchild relationships, including among the handicapped and after divorce. This is hardly a good read, despite the odd poem attempting to lighten the tone; but it is certainly a rich quarry for researchers on ageing.

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PAUL THOMPSON

Colleen L. Johnson and Barbara M. Barer. *Life Beyond 85 Years: The Aura of Survivorship*. Springer Publishing Company, New York, 1997, 267 pp., \$33.95, ISBN 0 826 19540 7.

This book is based on in-depth interviews with 150 people aged 85 years and over living in San Francisco, and it focuses on their health, physical functioning, social support and quality of life. They were sampled from voting records (sampling details not given), and then a snowballing technique was used with respondents to locate more eligible interviewees (20% of sample members were obtained by snowballing). They were interviewed five times, at 14–16 month intervals. Three-quarters of the 150 respondents at baseline were women, and their mean age at the first interview was 88.9 years. By the time of the fifth follow-up there were just 48 survivors. The writing style of the authors, who are anthropologists, is slightly wordy although lively, but this does mean the reader has to hunt for the methodological details, rather than finding them presented in a structured format all together at the beginning. However, they include valuable observations about the difficulties of locating the oldest-old section of the population. The authors provide some gems throughout. In the middle of the methodological section they inform us that the San Francisco earthquake occurred during the second phase of the interviewing, so they were able to document the effects of this major event on respondents' lives.

The book contains rich data on a section of the elderly population we know little about, because they are not represented in sufficient numbers for analysis in large, random, sample-based population surveys. As the authors point out, most of the literature on very elderly people is dominated by analyses of their physical functioning which, while extremely relevant given their high levels of disability, has led to a narrow focus. While their sample is relatively small, it does show the dramatic decline in the respondents' levels of functioning over the six year study period. The authors present simple graphics and use case studies in illustrations (as is the style of the other chapters). The chapter on family relationships clearly shows the declining importance of friends in old age, and the increasing importance of children. New friendships are rare in very old age because there is a less equitable pattern of reciprocity. It was found, consistent with other research, that while children may not enhance their parents' morale or emotional well-being, they do play an important instrumental role and are their primary supporters.

The research presents rich insights into older people's well-being and its impediments. The authors point out that most respondents, despite their many problems, become less emotionally reactive with increasing age, or use cognitive processes to moderate negative effects, *e.g.* forgetting unpleasant events, or manipulating meanings – they had 'outlived their worries about the past'. However, in line with survey research, while they reported worrying less about finances and their families, they reported that their declining health and functional ability was the most difficult aspect of their lives. Apart from this, the examples clearly illustrate why very elderly people score better on scales of life satisfaction and well-being. Apart from the problem of the healthiest survivors, old people appear to transcend those factors that undermine well-being.

As the authors conclude, the very old are the ‘heros and heroines of our time. They have beaten the odds’. Their respondents appeared to be satisfied by their accomplishment of surviving whilst admitting that it is ‘tough’. The book is largely descriptive, rather than theoretical, although it includes the relevant references in the field. It is highly readable and insightful, and is particularly valuable in view of the limited research data about this group of people. It is aimed at academics, students and policy makers.

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ANN BOWLING

Colin Murray Parkes, *Bereavement: Studies of Grief in Adult Life*. 3rd edition, Routledge, London, 1996, 271 pp., £25.00, ISBN 0 415 11033 5.

The influence of Colin Murray Parkes over the past quarter-of-a-century on our understanding of grief and ways of helping bereaved people cannot be overstated. This is the third edition of his classic study of grief in adult life. The first edition, published in 1972, and the second edition in 1986, have helped raise awareness of the needs of people who have experienced bereavement and have brought the issue of grief to the forefront of both popular and academic debate. The books have wide appeal and are read by bereaved people, professionals, researchers and academics. His work is at the same time scholarly, deeply human and often poetic. Each edition has been a testimony to his claim in the introduction to the first edition that ‘a book about grief need not be doleful’. One of the secrets of this universal appeal is, I believe, that he combines statistical data from large studies with detailed and moving accounts from individual people. As he says:

Ideally, the two types of study should complement each other, for it is only by studying large numbers of people that we can generalise, and it is only by intensively studying a few that we can evaluate the significance of the mathematics of the many (p. 118).

Because the previous editions are so well known, I will in this review concentrate on just three aspects of the third edition; that which is different and new, the degree to which he answers his critics, and the relevance this work has for gerontologists.

Although when the first edition was published in 1972 literature on the subject was sparse, the last ten years since the publication of the second edition have seen a burgeoning of work – scientific, academic, professional and personal. We have experienced very public mass disasters and we have the spectre of AIDS to contend with. In response there are now three chapters in place of one which explore the determinants of grief. This enables Parkes to give an airing to the issue of ‘disenfranchised grief’: ‘losses that cannot be openly acknowledged, socially validated or publicly mourned’ (p. 134). As

well as deaths from AIDS, he applies this to a wide range of people and situations, for example, extra-marital attachments, perinatal deaths and abortions, social or psychological death as when a partner develops Alzheimer's disease, and the case of unrecognised grievers such as people in institutions.

The recognition of a specific condition, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as a diagnostic entity by the *Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSMIII)* of the American Psychiatric Association in 1987 confirmed many of Parkes's earlier findings on the impact of traumatic bereavement. He devotes much of chapter 10 to this syndrome. The chapter on 'Helping the bereaved' has also been expanded into two, to take account of the growth of interest and attention that this has received in the last ten years. But one of the most important additions is the development of his own theory of Psychosocial Transition (PST), which manages a synthesis of attachment theory and more sociological accounts of loss and change, thus truly furthering our understanding of reactions to loss.

Parkes in this as in the previous editions is mainly concerned with what causes bereaved people to seek psychiatric help and so there is an emphasis on the pathology of grief. Recent years have seen much critical debate about the medicalisation of grief and the 'normalising psychology' tradition. Parkes somewhat disingenuously dismisses much of this debate, claiming that concepts such as 'phases of grief' have been misunderstood and misinterpreted as rigid and fixed. He takes issue with the critical work of Wortman and Silver (1989) but does not address some of the more sociologically-based concerns raised by Jane Littlewood (1992) or Lindsay Prior (1989). Although he addresses social and cultural factors as determinants of grief, this is not and indeed does not claim to be a sociological account. Parkes is a psychiatrist who is concerned with the understanding and relief of psychological distress related to bereavement: this is the value of his work.

Given that most deaths in Western societies take place in old age, this book is highly relevant to its study. Parkes does however operate with a notion of the relative significance of 'timely' and 'untimely' deaths although he has tempered this view in a new section on 'age'. Here he acknowledges the importance of the multiplicity of losses that can occur in old age and draws out the links between depression and bereavement in older people. The study of bereavement has been a lifetime's work for Colin Murray Parkes. The publication of this third edition represents a major landmark in the study of grief and bereavement care.

## References

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Michael J. Leitner and Sara F. Leitner, *Leisure in Later Life*, second edition, Haworth, New York, 1995, 448 pp., hbk \$49.95, ISBN 1 560 24965, pbk \$24.95, ISBN 1 560 24966 8.

*Leisure in Later Life* is a textbook designed for college and university students preparing to work with older people in the field of leisure. For British readers this raises the question of relevance, given that there is virtually no such specialised training available in the United Kingdom. It also highlights, if that is not a contradiction in terms, the paucity of British research about the physiological and, more particularly, the psychological links between leisure activity and general well-being. But by pointing up the lack of British research and training, this text has an important role to play. The situation is changing. One indicator of new growth in Britain is the nascent *National Association of Professionals in Activities for Older People* (NAPA) which is bringing together people with mixed experiences, responsibilities and skills, but shared concerns about the provision of beneficial activities for older people and the desperate need for training.

The book begins with a useful series of definitions including the familiar concept of 'leisure' as free-time rather than a specific set of activities. Having laid open the field however, a glance at the practical sections demonstrates a rather odd imbalance. For instance, there are over sixty pages of specific physical exercises plus another seventy setting out adapted dance activities. A further forty pages deal with massage, clowning, drama, music, pets and arts and crafts, while in amongst this selection we find one half-page on reminiscence and life review. These sections do offer masses of practical ideas that could be used in diverse settings, as well as background information about, for instance, the benefits of exercise.

Although each chapter is set out as part of a course with tasks for students, such as devising innovative programmes of their own, the content is such that activity managers, providers and volunteers could make practical use of many of the ideas. On reading through the text, however, one begins to develop an uneasy feeling that its central focus is the provider and not the older person. There seems to be little acknowledgment of the importance of either choice or the competence of the older person to choose. It does not so much encourage a patronizing attitude as make one fear that the students using this text might, because they lack experience, fail to appreciate the contribution that older people can make to their own leisure activities. Very little is said about what older people can and do do for themselves, and ideas on encouraging input from older users are meagre. The idea of 'leisure counselling', along with the section on the burgeoning 'Senior Centres', gives us examples of good practice that could well be adopted outside the United States. The final chapter on 'issues' covers three areas: hospice care, sexuality, and the future. The latter topic is entirely about population growth and extended life-span. No mention is made of changing patterns of work and leisure. The words 'computer' or 'technology' do not appear in the index.

For those working for the provision of activities and the training of people in these fields, this book does have a lot of practical information and stimulating ideas. But reading it should be a 'pick-and-mix' experience – pick

out the valuable nuggets, examine the holes, and mix with an acknowledgement that older people themselves should be firmly at the centre of our learning and planning processes. Above all, this book makes us aware of the need to acknowledge the many benefits of the constructive use of leisure time and the need to recognize and take seriously the planning of services and training of those working in this field.

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Dorothy Ayers Counts and David R. Counts, *Over the Next Hill: An Ethnography of RVing Seniors in North America*, Broadview, Peterborough, Ontario, 1996, 276 pp., Can\$17.95 or US\$15.95, ISBN 1 551 11116 0.

This readable report of participant observation research is stronger on empathy than evaluation. The authors convey their intentions and enthusiasm well: 'if readers finish this book thinking they would probably like most of the people in it and might like to try the life for themselves... then we will have been successful'. The book is part autobiography, part interpretative anthropology, part manual and part a celebration, but withal conveys a substantial amount of information about a little documented, superficially eccentric, and distinctly American (and Canadian) group of older people. Hundreds of thousands give up conventional homes for at least a few years and live full-time in Recreational Vehicles (RVs). Although all estimates are frail, some 3 to 4 million US retirees spend part of the year travelling in their RVs, and a minority reside exclusively in these vehicles for many years, until they settle in one 'park' and convert the vehicle to a fixed prefabricated home. The predominant pattern is for recently retired people from the northern States to head south, particularly to the western mountains, for the winter.

The authors are accomplished anthropologists who previously studied ageing and death in Papua New Guinea. Holiday-camping brought them into contact with RVers, individually and *en masse* on parking sites and at rallies, and small Canadian grants enabled sustained research during 1993–4. The book has a strong academic structure but is studiously written for the general (and the *escapee*) reader: chapter headings include 'Lurking in the laundromat: doing research with RVers', 'If they aren't us, who are they?' and 'Hanging up the keys'. The nine chapters are organised around three themes: concepts, theory and method; description in context; and 'how RVing contributes to successful retirement'.

There is plenty here for the disinterested sociologist, although much of the formal academic discussion is either parked in the appendices and fascinating footnotes or scattered through the text. The detailed index is a great help in finding one's way around. The authors are well versed in contemporary debates in social gerontology, but there are sociological gaps, *e.g.* the extended consideration of negative stereotypes bound up with the term gypsy does not once mention the eponymous Indo-European people and their current parlous state. They detail well the numerous for-profit organisations and voluntary

associations that have sprung up to keep the vehicles on the road and to provide resting and recreational sites. The partly technical and partly self-identifying vocabulary (*e.g.* boondocking, down-agers, hitch-itch and pull-through) is well explained – the excruciating use of ‘toad’ for a small car dragged behind a motor home must be mentioned.

Limitations emerge however in the discussion of community, substitute families and mutual support: the ample demonstrations of friendliness, group sociability and modest instrumental mutual support are over-interpreted. Weary travellers have always been happy to help out an immobilised peer – to the next village. One non-profit enterprise initiative in Texas, named CARE, which provides low levels of domiciliary and day centre support is described (pp. 198–201), but the model is of paid care and little evidence is given of RVers themselves wanting to get involved (which occurs to a limited extent among conventional-housing retired communities in both America and among expatriates in southern Europe). ‘Although there is widespread recognition of the need for CARE, the desire for and admiration of independence is strong’ (p. 201).

Research on any self-selecting group engaged in innovative behaviour is bedevilled by the fact that the people who are most positive about it and are over-represented in its voluntary associations are unreliable sources for understanding the motivations, or the balance of advantages and disadvantages, of the habit. The Counts are aware of this but probably have not sufficiently discounted the effect. One learns a great deal about the daily activities of RVers including the many maintenance and housekeeping tasks, but much less about who adopts the lifestyle, its rewards, and why it is better than many other things including their previous domiciled lives. The sheer grandeur of the landscape in the south west American States may be sufficient reason for an extended RV vacation trip, but the chronic and extreme forms of this post-modern individualistic nomadism remain largely a riddle.

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Robert Adams, *The Personal Social Services: Clients, Consumers or Citizens?* Longman, Harlow, Essex, 1996, 290 pp., £13.99, ISBN 0 582 25875 8.

I read few textbooks these days but I was pleased with this opportunity. Adams’s book is informative, comprehensive and up-to-date in its description of the successes and failures of the Personal Social Services in post-war Britain. For readers of this journal, there are few direct references to ageing but, given that service delivery to those in need takes place against a backdrop of the constant competitive fiscal scrutiny of the Personal Social Services, it has relevance to gerontologists. The subtitle of the book is, ‘Clients, consumers or citizens?’ The author threads the text with analyses of the effect of the continually changing dominant political ideologies upon the structure and delivery of services. How did the client of the 1960s become the consumer of the 1980s and then the citizen of the 1990s? And why is it important? Adams

draws connections between the development of Beveridge's modern welfare state and the community care of Roy Griffiths. These champions were messengers for what the community has licensed the policy makers to create. The driving forces were, and are, the public's changing attitudes to and for the Personal Social Services.

When it comes to a professional service from Social Service Departments, Adams highlights that what you get is what you pay for (in salaries and training). The marginalising of group-living is the price paid for expecting a quality professional service from the least paid and least qualified workforce. As a social worker, I was encouraged by the author's opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of the profession, and the reasons for its failure to carve out a credible identity in the face of criticism from all political perspectives. The book splits into six broad parts. Beginning with the nature and history of the Personal Social Services, it goes on to examine different client groups; children and families, adults, disability, youth and criminal justice, as well as community care. This is a well argued and balanced book and one packed with information. If only the clients, consumers or citizens would leave me alone to read about what I should be doing.

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JIM TRAYNOR

Amanda J. Squires (ed.), *Rehabilitation of Older People: A Handbook for the Multi-disciplinary Team*. Second edition, Chapman & Hall, London, 1996, 295 pp., £18.99, ISBN 0 412 71930 4.

The first edition of this book was published in 1988. The substantial changes in the present edition are testimony to the changing attitude towards the rehabilitation of older people and the developments in the National Health Service which have brought a greater emphasis on community care and the promotion of a primary-care led approach to health-service delivery. The rehabilitation of older people is complicated by the many different professions and agencies that are involved. Physical, sociological and psychological dimensions of ageing should affect the way that different professionals approach rehabilitation. This book, described as a primer, includes contributions from physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, speech and language therapists, social workers, dieticians, chiropodists, doctors, hearing therapists and other professionals who work with older people. This rather old-fashioned parading of different professions' contributions and views is rescued by the earlier chapters which take a broader look at the complex issues. For example, the one by James George and John Young which considers the rehabilitation of elderly ethnic minorities is an extremely useful introduction for all those working in this field.

Most of the contributions mention the importance of team-working. The difficulties of ensuring that professionals work in a team rather than as a group of parallel contributors are tackled in a useful chapter by Margaret Hastings, who reviews the research and practical methods of developing team approaches. Some issues are surprisingly not addressed in this volume.

Particular issues related to generic workers, and users' and carers' involvement with community rehabilitation teams are only mentioned fleetingly. As with so many edited collections, it has been difficult to ensure that issues are not repeated and that chapters are of similar weight and quality. Unfortunately this book has not been able to solve these problems. Some chapters are basic and appropriate to the undergraduate non-specialist, whereas others are challenging and extending. For example, the chapter on 'Ethics and values in teamwork' by Denise Keir, and that on 'Disease and disability: prospects of intervention' by Cameron Swift, stand out from the simplistic overview of 'Assessment and goal setting' by Anna Smith. However, the latter would be a useful refresher or introduction for some health-service workers.

For a team to work well, it is important that the various members have a basic understanding of the philosophies, principles and practices of their co-workers. Certainly this book will help the physiotherapist understand the role of the nurse, the speech and language therapist and the chiropodist more fully and *vice versa*. This is a worthy end in itself but surely when we come out of our respective training institutions, we should be harnessed with some of this basic interdisciplinary knowledge.

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PAM ENDERBY

Steven H. Zarit and Bob G. Knight (eds), *A Guide to Psychotherapy and Aging: Effective Clinical Interventions in a Life-Stage Context*, American Psychological Association, Washington, DC., 1996, 283 pp., £31.95, ISBN 1 557 98373 9.

Steven Zarit and Bob Knight have been actively involved for many years in both the provision of psychotherapy for older people and research in this area. They have produced a timely and scholarly text, which represents a significant addition to the current literature on this subject. Its focus is upon the increased need for highly trained psychotherapists to provide a wide range of effective, appropriate and high-quality psychotherapy for older people. The authors address the extensive, unmet needs of older people for effective psychotherapy and argue that the opportunities to work with this population will increase dramatically. This is due to the increasing number of older people and the fact that in the future they are more likely to be psychologically-minded than previous generations and thus more receptive to psychotherapy. In order to meet the challenge of these new and growing demands, the authors argue that mental health workers will need specific knowledge and skills.

This book sets out to meet this need, by providing a thorough account of geropsychology and of researched-based reviews of psychotherapeutic interventions with older people and their carers. These include: psychoanalytic psychotherapy, cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy, family therapy and inter-personal psychotherapy. It is the only book known to the reviewer that discusses such a wide range of approaches to psychotherapy with older people. The contributors are experts both in the particular form of therapy that they write about and in working with older people. Their practical suggestions

about ways in which therapies might be modified, to meet the demands of older clients, are likely to be very useful to practitioners. The book also includes discussions of ethical issues facing therapists, gender and ageing, personality, grief, loss, chronic illness, disability and cognitive and emotional changes among older people. It considers, too, the ways in which different settings, such as primary care, medical and psychiatric units, nursing homes and private consulting rooms, influence the process of psychotherapy. The book is punctuated throughout with lively and illuminating case examples, illustrating the processes of different forms of psychotherapy. Problems are addressed at a technical level and solutions are suggested.

The book presents strongly the proven effectiveness of psychotherapy with older people, although the case is less strong for psychoanalytic psychotherapy. This is not because psychoanalytically-informed psychotherapy is thought by the authors to be less effective (the chapter on this form of psychotherapy makes a good case for psychoanalysis, drawing upon the English work of Coltart, 1991). It is simply that the effectiveness has not been subjected to the same amount of research scrutiny. The authors argue that the effectiveness of psychotherapy depends upon the tailoring of therapy to meet the particular needs of the older person, through thorough assessment (there is an excellent chapter on assessment with elderly clients) and the provision of care provided by highly trained personnel (rather than half-baked applications by inadequately trained people).

Most of the material in this American text is highly relevant to the British situation, though how an increase in psychotherapy provision for older people will be funded remains unclear. In the United States since 1989, *Medicare* has covered one-half of the cost of assessment and out-patient psychotherapy. Whether the NHS can fund the badly needed psychotherapy for older people remains an open question but, regrettably, I fear it is unlikely to be given a high priority. Despite this, I strongly recommend this book.

## References

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