

Adolescent Psychiatry. Proceedings of a Conference held at Douglas Hospital Montreal, Quebec, June 20 1967. Edited by S. J. SHAMSIE. Published as a service to the medical profession by Schering Corporation Limited. Pp. 84. No price stated.

During the last two decades psychiatric in-patient units for adolescents have slowly multiplied in Great Britain, the United States and Canada. Each unit started independently and followed no set pattern, yet all seem to have developed on fairly similar lines. As a result, there are now enough psychiatrists in each country whose practice is mostly with adolescent in-patients, to want to meet to discuss their common problems. The Conference, held at Douglas Hospital, of Canadian and United States psychiatrists, was for this purpose; had it been possible, it could with advantage have included psychiatrists with similar experience from Great Britain.

The editor of the proceedings at once expressed his reluctance in using the term 'adolescent psychiatry', indicating the fear of splitting the field of psychiatry into too many sub-specialties. On the other hand, he pointed out the need to build up appropriate training and experience for the increasing number of psychiatrists who will work with adolescents. There followed contributions by psychiatrists on differing aspects of adolescent psychiatry, some more relevant than others to the main theme of the conference. In due course there emerged some differences of opinion on the care of adolescents in a psychiatric hospital. Should there be a separate unit; a special programme for adolescents living as a group in a ward among adults; or are they best split up as individuals among adult patients? A final panel discussion was appropriately headed 'Do adolescents need separate treatment facilities?' This discussion is useful to read, but participants did not stress that patients of adolescent age have varying needs for their psychiatric care and treatment. Their maturity differs and they can suffer from disparate psychiatric disorders, while their behaviour varies from the conforming to the seriously anti-social. What may be suitable provision for treatment in hospital for some adolescent patients may not be so for others.

The Chairman in his concluding remarks pointed out that the United States had been studying the special needs of adolescents in hospital for fifteen years, somewhat longer than in Canada and Europe. This is a small point, but had he referred to British writings in this field he might have found that the first two special units for adolescents opened up in Great Britain in 1949, somewhat earlier than in the United States.

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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Early Experience and Behaviour. Edited by GRANT NEWTON and SEYMOUR LEVINE. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1968. Pp. 785. Price not stated.

In recent years the attention devoted to biological and psychological studies of development has increased enormously, and the field is now in the state in which, for example, learning theory was in the early 50s, when the volume of work generated by different schools and disciplines made the task of digestion and reconciliation nearly impossible.

Much of this work has generated theory which is of relevance to psychiatry; regrettably, many psychiatrists have had no contact with the disciplines in which the work has been done since their pre-clinical or even pre-medical days.

An attempt, such as this volume, to bring together this research is very welcome; it is a pity that the attempt is not more successful.

'The advanced student and the specialist' to whom most of the contributions are directed, will find each in his own area a comprehensive account (though inevitably biased by the contributor's own views) which in this fast expanding field is inevitably already out of date. I can find only one published reference dated 1966 quoted in the bibliographies: the majority of 1965 references refer to authors' own work. This detracts from the somewhat breathless emphasis on recent research and controversy.

Within these limitations the articles are helpful and certainly provide useful starting points for the reader from other disciplines.

In contrast, three chapters at the end of the book, attempting to summarize and bring together certain aspects of early developmental studies for the 'clinically oriented reader', are much more useful. O'Connor's chapter on 'Children in Restricted Environments' and Caster's on 'Perceptual Deprivation in Institutional Settings' will be of particular interest to psychiatrists.

The book is well written and refreshingly free of unnecessary jargon. Careful editing and cross references to other contributors' chapters make for a much more coherent whole than is often the case in collections of papers from many authors, though some stimulating disagreements remain. One would have liked to see these enlarged; Bronfenbrenner, for example, in a review of early deprivation in mammals dismisses rather cavalierly T. Schaeffer's contention in Chapter 5 that anthropomorphic analogies may mislead not only in the interpretation of results but also in the design of animal experiments. Problems of this sort are fundamental to the comparative approach