

ham Health Authority, Community Unit, Memorial House, Standard Hill, Nottingham NG1 6FX.

This package provides a very good basis for training sessions for general practitioners and other health care workers involved or becoming involved in child health surveillance. It should prove useful for both initial training and for update sessions for more experienced practitioners. The video consists of four parts (introduction, communication skills, the examination, and outcomes) plus an 'activity' 18 slides of situations likely to be found during a surveillance check, where the participants are requested to write down the action they would take. There are two other activities based on sections of the video and very useful handouts, together with an evaluation form to complete the half day session. The package is designed to be highly interactive and to accommodate participants coming from varied levels of experience. It can be used flexibly with modifications to suit local needs.

The quality of the video varies from fair to excellent. Some of the slides used in the 18 situations section and elsewhere are of poor quality rendering interpretation difficult. There are some inconsistencies in the presentation, inevitable in such an unevaluated and rather controversial area of child health practice. The lack of agreement on terminology is discussed. In one section 'the doctor' who appears to be either a clinical medical officer or already a general practitioner doing surveillance is advised to sit down and discuss her findings with 'the health visitor' and with 'the GP' (a person who appears in another section of the tape as the link worker). Some may find the slightly patronising and proselytising approach of the presentation somewhat irritating especially the rather protracted section on the need for good communication.

Overall, however, the package is well thought out, well presented, and well worth buying for departments undertaking training in child health surveillance.

BRENT TAYLOR
Professor of community child health

The School Entrant Review. A video training package. Commissioned by: Nottingham Health Authority. Production Company: Chrysalis Television Midlands. Cost of training package (video and manual): £195; additional trainer's manuals £6 each. For details contact: Mrs B Whitchurch, Training Office, Nottingham Health Authority, Community Unit, Memorial House, Standard Hill, Nottingham NG1 6FX.

However much paediatric experience the newcomer to community work may have, some time must be devoted to teaching the particular skills of the trade. This tends to follow the time hallowed industrial principle of 'sitting by Nellie' for a few sessions until deemed ready for useful work (not wishing to offend the one and only Nellie, listed on page 45 in current BPA handbook, by whom any aspirant community paediatrician would be well advised to sit; she cannot be expected to provide for the whole country). Properly organised classroom instruction in basic as distinct from the leading edge aspects of the craft remains rare. The ever innovative Nottingham department of community paediatrics has done us all a service in designing a course of

instruction for both medical and nursing recruits to school health based around an instruction manual for the organisers, work sheets for participants, and a 45 minute, four part video. The course contains important lessons too for old stagers (your reviewer included) who could be subtly updated by exposure to this training package in the role of trainer. Selected parts of the package would be useful for teachers because it could help them to see what the school health service is all about and how they can work cooperatively with us. The same applies to school governors.

The trainer's manual tells one how to lay on the course, the equipment and type of venue needed, when to break for coffee, and the families one will need to recruit for demonstration purposes. The course starts with a historical overview of school health: where it came from, what it does now, and exposes the group to the current debates about its future, tending to side with preservation of the status quo, which should be taught to all paediatricians in training whatever their discipline. Carried out conscientiously, with first rate instructors, and good organisation, the manual on its own would form the basis of an excellent course. Video is a very powerful teaching tool; it is easy for armchair critics to carp and forget that it is exceedingly difficult to make well and expensive to accommodate second thoughts. I am glad that real professional staff and families were used instead of actors. I did not like all the messages and examples given, and although she was an excellent role model, would criticise the doctor's excessive use of leading questions. The manual goes into 'questioning techniques' in some detail and if used properly should correct this fault. I do not think that examining the upper abdomen of children who are standing up is good practice and it is a pity that testicular examination was not shown. The video, however, is only part of the course and local tutors are expected to expand on these points. The manual will be easier to modify in the light of experience as opposed to the video.

The school nurse in the video sat in the background and in real life I hope that she would have used her time more productively. The weighing scales used (£7.50 when I last visited Asda) take economy and inaccuracy to extremes. As long as points of this type are recognised and discussed no harm will result. What must not be done is to lend the video on its own to a new recruit to take home. It will be the intelligent use of the manual and the resulting group dynamic that will make or break this course; the video is a supplementary basis for discussion.

EUAN ROSS
Professor of community paediatrics

BOOK REVIEWS

Chronic Childhood Disease—An Introduction to Psychological Theory and Research. Christine Eiser. (Pp 174; £25.00 hardback, £8.95 paperback.) Cambridge University Press, 1990. ISBN 0-521-38519-9 (h/b), 0-521-38682-9 (p/b).

Every so often there is a piece of work bringing together research and thinking on a subject and acting as the source of reference for the next few years. In 1965 Vernon and colleagues published a comprehensive survey of literature on the effects of hospitalisation and illness in childhood.¹ Ten years later Pless and Pinkerton not only collected and sifted the literature on the psychology of chronic childhood disease, but began to provide a conceptual model of adjustment and maladjustment of the child with a chronic disorder in his family and society.² In the same year the psychologists Rachman and Phillips, in a brief but encouraging description of ways in which psychologists had already applied their skills to the problems of medical conditions and treatments, wrote one of the first tentative calls to clinical psychologists in Britain to turn their own attentions to the field of medicine.³ Now Christine Eiser demonstrates how far the psychologists have come in the last 15 years in one area alone: the psychological effects of chronic disease on children and their families.

This book reviews and draws together the results of well conducted studies, and emphasises the relevance for clinical practice. Throughout, the emphasis is on children's illness and treatment experiences in the context of their development, and other aspects of their social lives. The book is kept to a reasonable length by largely excluding the major motor disabilities, blindness, deafness, and mental handicap.

The contents cover hospitalisation and pain management and the effects of chronic disease on educational achievement, self esteem, behaviour, and family life and other relationships. The developmental approach is exemplified in the discussion of the development of concepts about the body, illness, and death and the consequent importance of appropriate communication of information to sick children of differing ages to aid their realistic understanding and contribution to compliance with treatment regimes. Chapters on the encouragement of coping strategies, and important issues which may inform and determine future research, round off this comprehensive review.

This book stands a good chance of becoming the source book on the psychology of chronic childhood disease, at least until Christine Eiser needs to bring it up to date.

ROY HOWARTH
Consultant psychiatrist

- 1 Vernon DT, Foley JM, Sipowicz RR, Schulman JL. *The psychological responses of children to hospitalisation and illness: a review of the literature.* Springfield: Thomas, 1965.
- 2 Pless IB, Pinkerton P. *Chronic childhood disorder—promoting patterns of adjustment.* London: Henry Kimpton, 1975.
- 3 Rachman SJ, Phillips C. *Psychology and medicine.* London: Temple Smith, 1975.

Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology. 3rd Ed. By SJH Emans, DP Goldstein. (Pp 621; £35.00 paperback.) Churchill Livingstone (Little, Brown), 1990. ISBN 0-316-23399-4.

Confronted with ever increasing requests for advice on children and adolescents with genital signs and symptoms: I need this book.

A paediatrician and a gynaecologist have successfully collaborated to produce a sensible and sensitive guide to the common and important gynaecological problems of childhood and adolescence. It is written in a refreshingly



The School Entrant Review

Euan Ross

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