

Book reviews

Health Services in Schools—a New Look. By Kingsley Whitmore. Pp 143: £4.95 paperback. Spastic International Medical Publications/Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd, 1985.

This book grew out of a series of papers prepared by Dr Whitmore for the executive of the now defunct Association of Clinical Medical Officers ('Si monumentum requiris . . .'). After a brief historical introduction it presents a comprehensive documentation of the work of the school health service and discusses the influence of social disadvantage, ethnic origin, and other relevant factors. A review of present organisation and methods then leads to a critique of the service and to proposals for the reform of clinical strategies and of staffing and structure.

It would be difficult to overpraise this unpretentious book. The malaise of the school health service has been debated, and deplored, by a profusion of wise physicians; but Whitmore's mastery of the many complex issues, his clarity of exposition, and his robust common sense raise his monograph to the status of a minor classic. It has relevance both for individual professionals, whether doctors or nurses, concerned to improve the quality of their own contribution, and for those in administrative or managerial capacities who have the authority and the will to regenerate the service as a whole. Many others, including teachers, GPs, and (perhaps especially) hospital based paediatricians, will read the book with equal profit and in the conviction, if this reviewer's experience is any guide, that Whitmore has established an irrefutable case for the full rehabilitation of the school health service. His argument is illuminated throughout by an insistence on the twin principles of genuine team work between all the relevant disciplines and of the recognition of the full professionalism and clinical autonomy of the school doctor and his or her nursing colleague, hopefully released from the administrative irrelevancies that have shackled them for so long.

Blemishes are few and trivial. The section on positive discrimination is somewhat glib and superficial, and that on professional cooperation flows less limpidly than the rest. Far more importantly, how opportune that this book should appear just when health authorities are making

crucial decisions about the organisation and thrust of their clinical services! If it commands the widespread attention that its low price, readability, and importance so richly deserve the outcome could well be that long awaited new sense of hope and purpose for our educational health services.

H MCC GILES

Current therapy in allergy, immunology and rheumatology 85–86. By Lichtenstein, Fauci. Pp 272: £44.00 hardback. Blackwell Scientific, 1985.

This multi-author book from North America is the second edition to update information on the treatment of the diseases in question. In this volume there are 72 chapters, and of these only five are directly related to paediatrics—that is, asthma, food sensitivity, insect sting allergy, autoimmune thrombocytopenic purpura, and juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. As in any multi-author book the quality of the contributions is uneven. Also more than adequate attention is paid to the clinical details of each diagnosis, thus curtailing the space for the therapeutic advice. In general, there are no rigid guidelines for treatment of the diseases discussed in this book. The chapters on immunology are excellent and explain the therapeutic approach to immunological disorders in detail. It is a pity that the chapter on juvenile rheumatoid arthritis does not give a detailed account of the non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs being the first line antirheumatic drug therapy. There are noticeable gaps. For example, there is no mention of Kawasaki's disease, monoarthritis, and psoriatic arthritis.

All in all this book provides a useful source of reference for those clinicians especially interested in rheumatology, allergy, or immunology.

K M GOEL

Child Health—a Textbook for the D.C.H. Edited by D Harvey, I Kovar. Pp 374: £22.00 hardback. Churchill Livingstone, 1985.

This book is directed towards doctors

preparing for the DCH examinations, and, in its 30 chapters by various authors, sets the child health scene and covers early child development, preventive care, and the identification and treatment of the more common childhood problems likely to be met in primary care. In addition, appropriate information is given about investigation, treatment, and management at secondary care level, to enable the primary care doctor to advise, counsel, and support the family as necessary. There is also a chapter on tropical child health, emphasising the fact that three in four of the world's children are thus distributed. Finally, there are useful chapters on emergency procedures, prescribing, and, returning to the primary aim of the book, advice relating to examination technique and helpful examples of multiple choice questions.

The book, therefore, while appealing mainly to DCH candidates, will also be useful to those doctors offering a comprehensive child health service at primary care level.

The chapter on accidents and child abuse is timely and informative. It provides the reader with the opportunity of sharing the understanding of this complex subject with its experienced author (Dr Cooper), who also gives a valuable update on adoption procedures. Reference to sexual abuse is concise and acknowledges its growing importance. A more detailed account of the practical aspects of the procedures used in development screening would be welcome. For example, references to the testing of hearing are brief, and an examination candidate will need to turn elsewhere for information about these aspects.

While applauding the emphasis given in the book to the desirability of moving prevention into general practice, little is made of the need to ensure total child population cover or the need to collect data on a similar population basis to plan and monitor services appropriately. The school health service is referred to briefly, but educational medicine as such is not clearly defined, and information about special schooling is inaccurate.

These points aside, however, the book is attractively set out and provides candidates with a useful base from which to prepare for the DCH examinations.

MARION MILES