

BOOK REVIEWS

On the death of a child, 2nd Edition
Celia Hindmarsh,
ISBN 1 85775 445 X
Radcliffe Medical Press

This book is an excellent resource for anyone whose work involves them in any aspect child death. It articulates the issues of this varied and complex bereavement and addresses the fear of treading on unknown territory and not knowing the language or what to do or say.

Celia Hindmarsh writes out of her experience as the founder counsellor manager of the Alder Centre at Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool. The centre's remit is to support all those affected by the death of a child. This edition of the book updates the original 1993 publication, providing new information on support services as well as fresh insights into this particularly harrowing bereavement.

The book is offered as a resource to a the wide range of professionals who may find that their work involves them to a greater or lesser extent in the death of a child. It is divided into three sections: Practical information on child death and a discussion of the special features which distinguish it from other forms of bereavement; Guidelines on good practice and the remits and special skills of different professionals; and information on the various forms of support available.

On the death of a child is comprehensive in its coverage of the issues surrounding child death, but clear presentation means that the information is readily accessible. The wide coverage means of course that not everything can be covered in depth. The discussion of clergy roles in the professional remit section is frustratingly short, covering the spiritual care of all faiths and none in a few paragraphs. Nevertheless this is a genuine treasure trove of the variety of issues raised by the death of a child and how to handle them.

It is illustrated throughout with case studies to show both good and bad practice. These are helpful aids, especially for understanding how bereaved parents

view what is happening. The chapter on schools and the role and importance of the school community when a child dies contains some very helpful information. Guidance is given on how to break bad news to children, and of the kind of understanding of death that may be expected from children of different ages

If you need to know anything about the death of a child then this is the book to read. It is more than a starter for helping think through and deal with the issues such a death raises. The final section on schools is a particular gem which if you read nothing else makes this a book worth having on your bookcase.

Sandra Black, Chaplain, Yorkhill Hospital, Glasgow.

The Human Effect in Medicine
Dixon M. & Sweeney K.,
ISBN 1 85775 369 0
Radcliffe Medical Press

This book is aimed at GPs, but is of potential interest to a wider audience of healthcare professionals. The authors set out to challenge the prevailing rationalist, positivist thinking in medicine, in which science and technology are seen as the means to health, understood as the absence of disease. This approach, for all the gains it has brought with it, is simply not working, they say. Patients, rendered passive consumers of what medical technology has to offer, complain of the impersonality of medicine. GPs, cast in the role of scientists, too often fail to engage with patients as unique individuals, whose experience of illness requires a much more complex response than scientific medicine can offer. Medical armory increases, costs spiral, demand increases, as do levels of dissatisfaction. The end result of this is captured in Fay Weldon's description of the NHS having produced 'a very grizzly and unhealthy race of medicine addicted citizens.'

The authors advocate a revival of the healing art in the fullest sense, which recognises that we need

more than logic and science to cure our ills, both as individuals and as communities.

The 'human effect' is essentially the therapeutic potential of the relationship between patient and GP. To maximise this potential involves human qualities of intuition and careful attention, and a sense that generalisations about disease processes have their limitations when it comes to the healing of complex individuals, each with his own story to tell. The authors speak of the 'physician healer', whose particular skill in general practice is to know when to use science and when to draw upon other approaches to the healing art. The therapeutic effect of the doctor-patient relationship has been too long ignored, despite the evidence for the real health gains which can flow from it.

This book is not anti-science. It argues for a deeper understanding of what constitutes health, especially in a primary care setting. Its vision is of patient and GP in partnership; of the patient's potential for self-healing being activated through a therapeutic relationship with the GP; of communities whose members become increasingly empowered in self and mutual healing, and are no longer passive consumers of medical technology. If this vision is to be realised, much learning and unlearning needs to be accomplished by patients and doctors alike. It may be however, that the admission of the need to find a creative balance between the science and the art of medicine indicates a deepening level of maturity in the task of healing.

Georgina Nelson. Chaplain, St. John's Hospital, Livingston.

Treating People with Anxiety and Stress. A practical guide for primary care
Wilkinson G., Moore B. & Moore P.
ISBN 1 85775 139 6
Radcliffe Medical Press

This book is clearly written and directed at members of the primary care team with a clinical background, such as doctors, nurses and psychologists. It describes the different types of anxiety disorders and includes problems such as panic attacks and obsessive-compulsive disorder. The approach is evidence based, and the authors describe the biological basis

for the disorders, along with neurochemical hypotheses.

Treatment with medication is clearly described, and the descriptions of cognitive therapy are both illuminating and practical. This book may well encourage practitioners to make use of it with patients who are committed and have the necessary mental strengths.

The text is clear and key points clearly illustrated in tables which are easy to refer to. I personally found the section on post-traumatic stress disorder extremely clear and informative. The authors note that the current vogue for immediate counselling in the aftermath of major trauma is, at best, unproven.

A section on self-help is a novel and useful feature, and the authors encourage photocopying.

This book can be recommended to all general practitioners and associated colleagues.

Practitioners who come from a different background, such as social work, and who work with clients with disadvantage backgrounds, poverty, abuse and dysfunctional families may find the clinical/biological approach somewhat alien.

Dr. Ian Buchan. General Practitioner/Hospital Practitioner, Family Psychiatry, Livingston.

The Essential Guide to the Internet for Health Professionals
Sydney S Chellen
ISBN 0-415-22747-X
Routledge 2000

It is a brave author who is willing to go into print, offering to provide an *Essential Guide* to a subject as vast and developing as the Internet. But this is what Sydney Chellen, who is a senior lecturer at Canterbury Christ Church University College, attempts to do.

The book is well written and illustrated, with a commendable lack of jargon. The trouble is the subject. There has been an explosion of public interest and use of the Internet, coupled with great leaps forward in computer technology and software over the last couple of years. This has left Chellen's

book looking slightly dated. It was published in 2000 but was clearly written well before. To be fair, he acknowledges the problem and offers on the cover of his book to provide updated information on his website. Unfortunately at the time of writing the author was recovering from a system crash and I was not able to view this material.

Chellen is a nurse educator and clearly is writing for student nurses. For this group he provides a well laid out and comprehensive guide to getting on line, surfing the *World Wide Web* and finding health related information. He gives advice on communicating by e-mail and a few hints about publishing your own website as well as delving into some of the less familiar research tools available on the Internet.

He offers his book as a guide for *health professionals*, but this is a book for students and researchers. What about healthcare chaplains? Unless you are contemplating research, I fear not. For those already on line it is too basic. For those about to dip their mouse finger tentatively into the murky depths of the Internet, there are many much cheaper and better general guides available in the bookshops. The best help of all, however, is to find a friendly internet guru. There always seems to be one around!

The best bits of Chellen's book are the lists of useful websites and his advice on research techniques. But you will search in vain for any material on spiritual care. For that you will have to look at chaplaincy websites such as:

www.chaplains.co.uk, www.sach.org.uk,
www.leeds.ac.uk/healthcare/general/spirit/spirit.html
www.hospitalchaplain.co.uk

The book is freely photocopyable (but adding to the cost), with many practical worksheets and is clearly the reduction to print of an excellent course taught to nursing students. But it will be of limited particular use to healthcare chaplain about to go on-line.

£29.99 is a high price to pay. Borrow it from the library, certainly; dip into it and use his references; but I doubt if it will appear on many a chaplain's letter this year to the red-suited gentleman with the hearty laugh. www.emailsanta.com

Fred Coutts, Chaplain, Grampian University Hospitals, Aberdeen, and Healthcare Chaplaincy Training Officer for Scotland

Community Care of Older People
Beales D., Denham M., & Tulloch A. Eds.
ISBN 1 85775 032 2
Radcliffe Medical Press

Aimed mainly at healthcare professionals this book gives a fairly concise yet comprehensive outline of most aspects of the care of older people. The opening chapters outline issues and methods involved in the physical and mental assessment. They assume a significant background medical knowledge and would be quite daunting without this.

Later the book turns to areas of more general interest specifically institutional care, community care, law, ethics and the role played by carers. Each of these chapters covers the main areas involved, however, would have benefited from more clear summaries of the more complex areas. For example legal issues are covered in most chapters however the chapter devoted to those issues struggled to present the facts in an easily absorbed fashion. To be fair most of these areas are difficult to grasp regardless of how they are presented.

The areas I found most interesting were those related to the changes brought about by the community care act in the early 1990's. These brought about dramatic changes for many older people and those looking after them. The point is clearly made that many of the changes came into effect without the resources or expertise needed to implement them being in place. Services that are potentially available are outlined. What happens when they are oversubscribed is only alluded to.

The main function of this book as a whole appears to be to provide a compact resource for people likely to be involved with planning care professionally. The individual chapters however, provide useful introductions to areas that may be of specific interest especially in the later chapters. One to look out in the library perhaps.

Martin Wilson, SHO with special interest in care of the elderly, Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.

Introducing Palliative Care: Third edition

Robert Twycross

ISBN 1 85775 389 5

Radcliffe Medical Press

Those with an interest in palliative care will find this a valuable addition to their bookshelves. The first of six parts covers topics of general interest including quality of life through to ethical considerations, an area, which has helpfully been expanded from previous editions. The questions of Double Effect and Euthanasia are dealt with sensitively and well.

Part two discusses areas of psychosocial aspects of care, including spiritual care and religious and cultural needs which is a very good introduction for any chaplain coming new to this area of work. In considering spiritual care discussion is made of what may cause spiritual pain and who may be involved in providing the necessary care. A brief description of different faiths then follows. The section on bereavement, also included in part two, is an excellent overview of the main areas that concern those involved in bereavement care, including work with children.

Parts three to five, which have been greatly revised in this edition, discuss symptom management and drug profiles. This is done in such a way that even those who have no medical training will find understanding of what causes much of the physical distress to their patients and what can be done to alleviate this. In drawing to a conclusion in part six the author speaks of approaching death from the view of the patient and the family - but concludes with the need of professionals also to care for themselves.

Perhaps because of the author's own interest in the care of cancer patients, the book mainly focuses on the care of patients who are terminally ill with cancer. However this book would be of value to those involved in any area of palliative care. It is very well set out, with the many diagrams and tables giving important checklists. This makes easy reading yet gives a wealth of valuable information.

Gillian Munro, Chaplain, Roxburgh House, Aberdeen.