diagnosis can be aided by the detection of HLA B 27 and a few lines later appears the statement 'that the marker does not necessarily show that the disease is present' – clearly conceding that this is not in fact a diagnostic test.

Overall, one's feeling is that this book should *not* be recommended to patients or their families, as being insufficiently detailed or authoritative to give reliable information on any one particular disorder, but would be very useful for lay persons intending to work as physiotherapy aides or occupational therapy aides, or for social workers involved in the assistance and resettlement of rheumatic sufferers and who need a bird's eye view of the whole subject without too much detail. The interesting allusion to the hazards of seeking treatment in Mexico has great relevance to practice in California, where the book originated, but will be a source of puzzlement to English readers.

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Aspects of Occupational Health, edited by W.M. Dixon and Susan M.G. Price. Pp.276, illustrated. Faber and Faber, London, Boston, 1984. £5.25.

Written by eight occupational physicians, six occupational health nurses, a Health Education Officer, a barrister and a physiotherapist, this book is intended primarily for nurses wanting an introduction to Occupational Health. It may also be of interest to doctors contemplating part-time work in industry and to Hygienists, Safety Officers and Personnel Officers in industry.

While concentrating on the functions of occupational health nurses and their training, the book aims to provide a broad, but superficial introduction to a wide range of occupational health problems like working with food, metals, chemicals, animals and vegetables and in a dusty environment and with other chapters on physical hazards, travelling overseas and mental health. There is no pretence of dealing exhaustively with each topic, but it stimulates the reader to seek further information. To this end, each of the 15 chapters has, as well as a comprehensive list of references, valuable suggestions for further reading.

Within a small compass the editors have succeeded in covering adequately much of the effect of work on health, but perhaps a bit more on the effect of health on the capacity to work would give the uninitiated

more insight into the balance of work performed in Occupational Health Services. With this small caveat, this volume more than achieves its aim of indicating the opportunities and satisfactions in occupational health nursing.

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The Care of the Elderly in General Practice, M. Keith Thompson, Library of General Practice Series. Pp.340, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1984. £14.95.

This book gives a comprehensive account of the physical, psychological and social problems of the elderly and suggests ways of organizing a primary health care team approach for their diagnosis and management. It can be read for interest, for study and be used as a reference book. The work, with its easy-to-read style, demonstrates the general practitioner author's enthusiasm and experience and is of value to all doctors involved in the care of the elderly.

The book is divided into five parts: epidemiology and resources, a large section describing disorders system by system, psycho-social problems, the milieu of care and self assessment. The latter is probably of more interest to trainees. The general balance of the book is good but a few topics are dealt with twice and some viewpoints such as the use of ECT, the best drug and the number of investigations might not always meet with universal agreement. A careful appraisal is rightly suggested before any treatment is embarked upon. For example, the asymptomatic hypertensive's balanced life may be unnecessarily disrupted by the complications of therapy.

There are many useful lists, tables and references but the index is a little deficient for a book of this size.

Dr Thompson describes the ageing process and the development of geriatric medicine in the community. He rightly states that the aim must be to improve the quality of life and so far as is possible maintain the elderly so that they can live independently at home. This book should be on every general practitioner's shelf and act as an incentive to improve the quality of care for the increasing number of elderly people.

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