Most of the papers are on the short side, and some researchers will clearly prefer to consult the original articles published in scientific journals subject to the peer review process.

Three of the nine sections of the book are less directly concerned with epidemiological aspects and concern aetiology and pathogenesis, choice of drug treatment and problems in compliance, and experience with various drug regimens. There is a sense of *déjà vu* about some of these papers, compounded by the unfortunate fact that the contributions were made three years before publication of the key 1985 studies in hypertension by the MRC, EWPHE and IPPPSH.

The cost-benefit ratio of this book is also not in its favour, especially with the availability of so much up to date information about hypertension in major scientific journals and in the sponsored published proceedings of learned societies.

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An Introduction to the Psychotherapies, Second edition. Edited by Sidney Bloch. Pp. ix + 285. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Tokyo, 1986. £8.95 (paperback), £15.00 (hardback).

It is a pleasure to review the second edition of this already well established book. Since its appearance in 1978, it has succeeded in making the concept of psychotherapy understandable to many undergraduate and postgraduate students. It has been of invaluable assistance to their teachers and inevitably become recommended reading, with few if any competitors, in many medical schools.

Every chapter takes into account more recent developments and there are additional chapters on brief focal psychotherapy and child psychotherapy by Bernard Rosen and Shula Wolff respectively. The authors of each chapter therefore remain pre-eminent in the subject covered. An aspect of that pre-eminence is seen in the widely informed readiness of each author to distinguish common ground in different approaches and equally to delineate divergencies of view both with clarity and appreciative understanding. The book is never a battle-ground of schools but a series of discussions conspicuous for their clarity of exposition and wisdom in assessment. Such qualities can only come from experienced authors, secure in themselves yet imbued with that youthful brightness, which welcomes what is new and cheerfully confesses to past errors.

The new edition can be recommended with enthusiasm to students in all the mental health professions. It deserves a place in every psychiatric library and on every psychiatric trainee's reading list. It has sufficient new material to be bought as a replacement and will be read with profit by many an experienced practitioner.

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The Management of AIDS Patients. Edited by David Miller, Jonathan Weber and John Green. Pp. xii + 202, illustrated. Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1986. £30.00 (hardback), £10.95 (paperback).

The Chief Medical Officer reputedly said recently that AIDS represents the greatest public health challenge this century. This book written by various members of the St Mary's Hospital AIDS team would certainly reinforce this view. The enormous range of new or previously extremely rare diseases caused by human lymphotropic virus 3 (HTLV-3) is discussed in detail as well as the new medical, nursing and counselling skills required to deal with such patients. The book is designed to be read by doctors, nurses, laboratory and counselling staff to plan for future needs when faced with their own epidemic of the disease. However, the range of new skills required is large and the degree of knowledge and dedication to deal with such patients is high. There must be a strong case for treating the majority of AIDS patients in specially equipped and staffed regional centres. I would have welcomed an informed view of the possible size of the epidemic and the impact on health care provision in various parts of the country.

The initial chapters of the book deal with the medical management, virology and immunology of HTLV-3 infection. The virological chapter in particular is a beautifully clear exposition of current knowledge in an extremely complex field. There are bound to be differences of opinion about current management in such a rapidly expanding subject and the lack of references may be a source of irritation to those physicians already grappling with the problems of care. Rightly, considerable emphasis is given to counselling of various groups including those presenting in the venereology and haemophilia clinics as well as those in high risk groups with founded or unfounded worries. Blanket testing for antibodies to the HTLV-3 virus in high risk patients is clearly extremely controversial. A positive test will have a profound psychological impact on the patient as well as carrying implications for employment and life insurance. Also even when a variety of methods is used testing will occasionally yield a false positive result. On the other hand testing and the certainty of knowledge on the part of the patient with regard to potential infectivity may have an important public health role in reducing the spread of the virus. The psychological relief of those who are negative may be profound and this may also modify their behaviour. Certainly knowledge of a positive test will change the perspective of the Primary Health Care team in dealing with what otherwise might be conceived as a trivial illness in such patients. Both sides of this debate are fully addressed in the book. One is left with a rather unsatisfactory feeling as to what the right answer is – obviously each case has to be individually assessed.

In this book (which can be read from cover to cover in an evening) extensive use is made of tables which provide a source of further reference. I can strongly recommend it as an introduction to this fascinating disease.

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