Ethical dilemmas in health promotion. Ed: Doxiadis S. (Pp 234; £27.50) John Wiley & Sons, 1987.

This is a collection of articles with an introduction and conclusion by the editor. It is divided into sections on theoretical background, general issues, and specific issues. The editor describes the way in which an editorial committee, and the authors, developed the collection through a series of meetings. Its format and genesis thus suggest a relatively integrated approach. However the strengths of the book lie in its parts rather than in some architectural whole. This is largely inevitable not only because "This subject . . . is a very difficult and complex one", as the introduction warns us, but also because it is a relatively new one. There is little or no shared stock of theory or vocabulary for the authors to build upon. They are faced with the challenge of identifying the scope and methods of analysis while simultaneously trying to clarify or settle substantive issues.

Knox is one of the contributors who does this remarkably well. He uses fluoridation, vaccination, rationing, and confidentiality as illustrations to argue for an irresolvable conflict between the principles of private and public health care, a conflict which, he argues, can therefore be managed only by practical and legislative solutions and not settled by moral theory alone. This discussion is complemented by Karhausen's reflections on the use of relative and attributable indices. Elsewhere there are some useful accounts of the ingredients of ethical reasoning, eg. Pochin on the the problems of estimating occupational risk. The philosophical issue which receives the most attention is that of paternalism which is treated on the whole as a "necessary evil".

Overall the book does provide a stimulating impression of the complexity of the subject, and a valuable resource for those who wish to reflect further. Yet it does not provide a coherent and distinctive framework for future analysis to develop or challenge. The most telling illustration of this is the lack of any agreed account of what health promotion is: sometimes it is taken to be equivalent to disease prevention and sometimes not. As ethics is about ends as much as means, it would be helpful either to agree what the ends are or at least to make any differences explicit.

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AIDS: The safety of blood and blood products. Eds: Petricciani JC, Cust ID, Hoppe PA, Krijnen HW. (Pp 374; £29.50) John Wiley & Sons, 1987.

This book comprises 36 papers presented at a WHO meeting held in April 1986 to assess "the state of the art in regard to AIDS and the safety of blood and blood products".

The book is in five sections: an overview of AIDS, transmission by blood products, antibody screening tests, donor notification issues, and, finally, policy issues and screening strategies. Excellent discussion is interspersed between the papers. Updated WHO recommendations on maintaining the safety of blood and blood products are included as an appendix. There is a useful index.

The introductory papers are interesting, clear, and well illustrated, and the section on transmission contains much useful and reassuring information on the safety of plasma derived hepatitis B vaccine and normal immunoglobulin. Antibody testing is covered in more technical detail than many readers will appreciate though there are lucid and concise explanations of the principles of testing, including the difficult subject of confirmatory testing.

The final two sections cover the medical and legal aspects of AIDS and review policy issues and screening strategies.

Inevitably with a subject advancing as quickly as AIDS some of the information presented is out of date (eg. the "AIDS" virus is referred to as HTLVIII/LAV instead of HIV) and other matters currently of interest are either not included or are minimally represented (eg, autologous blood transfusion and HIV antigen testing).

The book is priced at £29.50. I would expect it to be a useful read for those involved in procuring, processing or frequently using blood or blood products and for those involved in drawing up policies and strategies for the control of AIDS.

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Hypertension in the community. Eds: Rosenthal T, Silverberg D. *Bibliotheca Cardiologica* No. 42. (Pp 178; US\$186.75, DM 335, SFr 280) Basel: Karger, 1987.

This slim volume contains the papers presented at a 1985 Jerusalem conference on the problems of detecting and controlling hypertension throughout the world. I am not a supporter of such publications so when I read in the Editors' introduction that one justification for their work was that some of the papers would never be available in the journals, I reflected yet again on the differences between rigorously refereed journals and unrefereed books.