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 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.

Because the volume is slim, most of the papers are extremely short and do not appear to have been assembled around any discernible structure. Their diversity, however, makes some of them invaluable guides to the variety of approaches being adopted throughout the world to the problem of hypertension, for example, the suggestion that any health professional (dentist, pharmacist, chiropodist or optician), and not just doctors and nurses, should check the pressure of their new patients. The reader is also taken to Nepal, Portugal, Zaire, Ethiopia, and South Africa, and told about Russian immigrants to Israel, the elderly, and children, and the impact on stroke of a campaign in Hammersmith. Bill Miall offers a thoughtful review of the MRC Trial with its powerful smoking/non-smoking differences, and there are papers on ion fluxes and obesity. The papers on the effectiveness of various drugs seemed out of place, but may have made a financial contribution to the conference and to this publication.

This is not a book for individuals to buy, but departments working on hypertension or librarians whose clients include such departments should have one on their shelves.

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Measurement in health promotion and protection. Eds: Abelin T, Brzezinski ZJ, Carstairs VDL. (Pp 658; Sw fr 90) Copenhagen: WHO Regional Publications, European Series No. 22, 1987.

The World Health Organization is renowned for its efforts to prevent the spread of infectious diseases—and for producing vast quantities of dense, impenetrable literature. This new publication on

measurement in health promotion and protection is a welcome exception to this general rule.

In 15 chapters embracing 47 contributions, this text covers the concept of health promotion—ways of measuring health and gathering information to monitor the health status of populations and individuals, and provides a forum for discussion of some of the major methodological issues in this area of research.

The first section provides a clear exposition of the concepts of health and health promotion with excellent chapters by Noack and Abelin. Health promotion is presented as comprising all efforts directed at the protection, maintenance, and improvement of health potential. It is, however, almost inevitable, given the number of contributors, that there is considerable repetition of definitions and 'background' information.

The second section introduces types of measurement in health promotion from physiological and environmental indices to health behaviour.

The third section provides a world-wide selection of instances of measurement in practice.

These two latter parts would have benefited from a general chapter discussing evaluation of health promotion activities and one tackling the cost-effectiveness or cost benefit of such programmes. Nonetheless, the book is a valuable resource in an expanding field.

One drawback of the volume is that it lacks an index. This makes it difficult to locate specific material quickly and may reduce its appeal as a source of reference. This should not detract readers from consulting an otherwise useful and informative book.

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