Association, the Royal College of Nursing, the Royal College of General Practitioners, the British Paediatric Association, and the GMSC, the report laid out a model programme of preschool surveillance that could, so the Working Party believed, be justified by the scientific evidence that was available. The second document was the new contract for general practitioners, which introduced a general allowance for general practitioners who provide an approved surveillance programme in their practices, and who are suitably trained to carry out these tests.

This book (one of whose authors was a member of the Joint Working Party) is the first postcontract guide for general practitioners about the screening of preschool children. Like the others in the series, it is intended to provide a concise, readable and practical guide that is likely to be consulted as much by health visitors as by the general practitioners at whom it is aimed. The screening programme described in the book is virtually identical to that proposed by the Joint Working Party, covering neonatal examination, congenital dislocation of the hip, vision and hearing problems, heart disease, head circumference, weight and height problems, andcryptorchidism. Each topic has a brief epidemiological introduction, followed by more detailed descriptions of the procedures involved in carrying out the tests, the criteria for passing or failing (a curiously anachronistic turn of phrase), and the usual circumstances in which the child must be referred. Brief suggestions for further reading are given.

This is unquestionably a most timely book, not least in offering general practitioners a questionnaire on whether it will be worth their while to undertake the necessary training to qualify for the new allowance. Its cook book format is plainly one that will appeal to most general practitioners, and if it is at all widely read it should substantially enhance the quality of surveillance in general practice. Whether it will be instrumental in bringing a measure of unity into a damningly divided service is not a fair criterion against which to judge this particular book, but its success probably depends at least in part upon the responsiveness of general practitioners to the incentives introduced in their new contract.


Reports from the Social Survey Division of OFCS are to be welcomed and one on unemployment is no exception. It is extraordinary just how little work has been published on the effects of unemployment from the UK—a country which has been specialised in this field in view of the size of the problem throughout the eighties. Almost no research has been commissioned or sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Security.

This new survey involved two interviews with a sample of about 3000 families whose breadwinners started to sign on in 1983 aged between 20 and 60. The first interview took place in the autumn of 1983 after the breadwinner had been signing on for three months and the second interview took place a year later. The survey was designed to see how living standards changed over the first 15 months of unemployment and to compare the circumstances of families whose breadwinners continued to sign on with those whose breadwinners returned to work. Most families experienced a rapid and substantial reduction in their material living standards. The main areas affected were food, clothing, and leisure activities. The psychological impact was considerable and was almost as great in the case of the wives of the unemployed men as in the case of the unemployed men themselves. As expected, the psychological wellbeing of those returning to work was higher. For those who continued to sign on, the psychological scores for both men and their wives remained the same. Time 2 (2000 ce no further work) was between January 1984 and December 1984, and the results were published in the BMJ.

The size of the sample is obviously such that the results are not a brief account of what happened to the women and men interviewed in the winter of 1983. There were diminishing returns for the women, but the men were much more likely to be looking for work, to leave their wives or to separate, although the costs were the same. Time 2 was taken to represent the condition of women as well as the condition of men who had been in the job market for up to 15 months, and the results were divided into four categories. The results are presented as figures and tables, and they are accompanied by a brief description of the methods. As expected, the psychological wellbeing of those returning to work was higher. For those who continued to sign on, the psychological scores for both men and their wives remained the same. Time 2 (2000 ce no further work) was between January 1984 and December 1984, and the results were published in the BMJ.

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