

congratulated on integrating the contribution of seven authors into a book which is to some extent evangelical, but remains well written, clear and concise.

R PRESCOTT

**Trends in Coronary Heart Disease Mortality: The Influence of Medical Care.** MW Higgins, RV Luepker. (Pp 302; £32.) Oxford University Press, 1988. ISBN 0-19-505297-8.

Anyone interested in the epidemiology and prevention of coronary heart disease cannot fail to be impressed by the 60% decline in mortality from this disease in the USA over the last 30 years. This book represents the proceedings of a conference convened in December, 1986, to review the trends in coronary heart disease in the USA and in particular to assess the extent to which medical care has influenced the decline. The chapters are written by a series of American experts who examine the question from a number of different points of view, yet there is no sense of complacency about the current situation in the United States, perhaps because there is evidence that the rate of decline has slowed over the last decade. The sections of the book analyse the fall in coronary heart disease mortality, the trends in risk factors, and the impact of medical care on primary prevention, myocardial infarction and chronic manifestations of coronary heart disease. An attempt is made to relate the secular trends and regional variations in coronary heart disease to trends and variations in medical care. However one major deficiency in the enormous data sets on coronary heart disease in the USA is the inability to reliably separate incidence of disease from case fatality, although data are now being collected to address this deficiency. However the trend pattern of coronary heart disease in the USA seems to be of falling mortality, falling incidence, falling case fatality with rising disease prevalence and longer survival, trends which can be explained by either improved medical care, milder disease resulting from lifestyle changes, or a mixture of both. Rapid developments have taken place in the medical care of coronary heart disease and in new diagnostic techniques which have coincided with the decline in disease but it is difficult to prove a causal link. The relative impact of medical interventions versus lifestyle change is addressed more cautiously than before, as the complex interactions among risk factors and interventions is better understood. The role of medical care in changes in risk factors is concluded to be probably smaller than that of the lifestyle changes. Various aspects of the question are explored in detail using different approaches, and divergent views are expressed by the team of experts. The impact of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, management of myocardial infarction, drugs, coronary surgery, and angioplasty are all reviewed. No study has been mounted to address the question posed by this conference but many trials, studies and data sets on coronary heart disease are explored to shed light on the issues, and the need to develop better focused investigations is recognised. This book is important reading for those interested in the prevention of coronary heart disease, but don't expect all the answers!

W C S SMITH

## Short Reviews

**Effectiveness and Efficiency. Random reflections on health services.** AL Cochrane. (Pp 103; £9.95.) British Medical Association and the Nuffield Provincial Hospital's Trust, 1989. ISBN 0-7279-0282-2.

Originally published in 1977, Archie Cochrane's Rock Carling monograph "Effectiveness and Efficiency" was quickly recognised both nationally and internationally as a classic text and has had a great influence on attitudes towards the assessment of medical treatment and procedures. Apparently, demand for this book has remained constant and this new edition has additional interest; it includes a brief note by Archie Cochrane reflecting upon the monograph some two years after its publication and also his self written obituary.

**Brucellosis.** MM Madkour. (Pp 294; £65.) Guildford: Butterworth Scientific Ltd, 1989. ISBN 0723-60941-1.

Brucellosis is a common zoonotic disease of world wide distribution and in many countries the incidence of the disease continues to increase. This book provides a comprehensive review of the subject and includes chapters on epidemiology, microbiology, clinical features and programmes for control and prevention of the disease. The text is extremely well referenced and it should be a useful book for public health epidemiologists who have to deal with this condition.

**Cancer of the stomach.** JWL Fielding, J Powell, WH Allum, JAH Waterhouse, CC McConkey. (Pp 246; £40.) McMillan Press, 1989. ISBN 0-935859-80-2.

The West Midland Regions' Cancer Registry has been providing high quality data on a relatively stable population since 1957. This book provides a comprehensive analysis of this data in relation to gastric cancer. Much of the book comprises figures and tables describing many features of this disease, including histology, symptomatic presentation, treatment and survival, staging and prognosis. It should be of interest to epidemiologists concerned with gastric cancer.

**Hospital Closure; a Political and Economic Study.** Nancy Korman, Howard Glennerster. (Pp 173; £9.95.) Oxford University Press, 1990. ISBN 0-335-15429-8.

This book is about the administrative, financial and political issues involved in the closure of Darent Park Hospital—a large mental handicap hospital which served almost half of one Thames region. This hospital was the first large long stay institution closure in Britain, and the book is

based on a unique research project which monitored the political and professional debates, the planning process and the final implementation of the closure in detail over a seven year period. Beyond the closure, the authors' research went on to examine the fate of 800 former residents, where they went in the community, and the cost of re-provision of services for them.

**The Biological Basis of Disease. Selected papers by PRJ Burch.** Eds MS Chesters, JE Burch. (Pp 280; £14.95.) Leeds University Press, 1989. ISBN 0-85316-147-X.

The late Professor Philip Burch was primarily a physicist, but his work on radiation dosimetry led naturally to an interest in the biological, and particularly the carcinogenic, effects of radiation. His interest widened to cover the genetics, immunology and epidemiology of cancer and to causal mechanisms of disease. This book begins with three introductory essays by Burch's associates; F W Speirs, R G Burwell and A R Feinstein. Then follows a selection of 21 papers on a great variety of topics, for example, the aetiology of ulcerative colitis, health risks of passive smoking, and "Can epidemiology become a rigorous science?"

**Bibliography. Patient Compliance. A survey of Reviews (1979-1989).** C van Campen, EM Sluijs. (Pp 123; Dfl.10.) CIIP—Gegevens Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1989. ISBN 90-6905-104-4.

Patient compliance with medical treatment has drawn much attention from physicians and social scientists. More than 4000 articles and books have appeared on the subject. This bibliography does not attempt to review these articles but rather surveys review articles that have appeared on the subject. Fifty six reviews are surveyed and include those focusing on compliance in the elderly, children and the chronically ill. Each title is accompanied by an abstract of approximately two pages. This short book should prove useful for those wishing to begin a literature review in this field.

F G R FOWKES

## NOTICE

**The 9th International Symposium on Atherosclerosis** will be held in Jerusalem on October 6-11, 1991. For further information please contact Professor Y Stein, PO Box 50006, Tel Aviv 61500, Israel.