

protagonists when they are nearer the twilight of their careers. As the volume of empirical research on the effects of the reforms slowly accumulates, yet another story will emerge. In the meantime, this book has succeeded in showing that sense can be made of even the most complex events in the very recent past by a well informed, detached observer.

NICHOLAS MAYS

Director

*Health and Health Care Research Unit,
The Queen's University of Belfast*

Health Promotion: Disciplines and Diversity. Eds R Bunter and G MacDonald (Pp240; £12.99). London: Routledge, 1992. ISBN 0 415 05981 X

This is a useful and timely publication. Its covernote argues that it is the "first book to trace the theoretical roots of health promotion, in disciplines such as psychology, sociology, education, and epidemiology". Following the short introduction, the editors provide an overview of concerns and developments underpinning the rationale for the volume. The remaining chapters address "primary" (those quoted above) and "secondary" feeder disciplines. "Secondary" refers to what the authors admit is a somewhat arbitrary collection of subjects (such as social policy, economics) and sub-disciplines (particular aspects of "communication theory", social marketing). A final chapter by Rawson, subtitled "lessons from the philosophy of science", provides a philosophical perspective and addresses key issues around the development of health education and health promotion as academic enterprise and professional practice. A glossary of terms is included.

The range of issues raised, theories and perspectives appraised, and practical examples presented is vast and a brief review cannot really do justice to these. Specific chapters are highly varied – perhaps inevitably – in their appraisal of concepts and concerns and in their application to practice. Part one certainly provides an accessible overview of the contribution made by the "primary" disciplines to health promotion. Tannahill's chapter provides a clear introduction to epidemiological concepts and a strong case for an epidemiology of health.

Weare draws out recommendations for "effective" education from her lucid account of the competing goals of education – in society and in health. Thoroughgood provides a useful introduction to the role of sociology in terms of substantive content and critical analysis. She identifies the part sociology has played in understanding health and illness. Further, the range of concerns addressed illustrates that "the sociology of health and illness" is but one way in which the subject can illuminate health promotion. However, the critique of health promotion (an important task for sociology) could address more fully debates within health promotion about goals, assumptions, and approaches.

Each chapter is interesting in its own right and a wealth of valuable material is presented. Overall, despite acknowledging that it may not be exhaustive, the rationale for selection of disciplines isn't discussed, though they do give convincing reasons for excluding medicine.

The editors' "scene setting" chapter does not quite meet the intentions set out in the introduction, "to put health promotion in a

public health context and explore its relationship to health education". The account of historical development and interplay of these fields is rather over simplified and presented as fact, despite later touching on issues of epistemology and the social and political influences on "bodies of knowledge".

A conclusion is necessary – which addresses how insights from such diverse disciplines can be integrated and used in practice. Rawson's chapter tackles this to an extent but the editors do not revisit the many important concerns about professional and disciplinary development tantalisingly raised earlier in the book.

Such a book will inevitably tread an uneasy path between comprehensive overview, basic introduction and discursive account of key concerns. This book provides a useful introduction to the multidisciplinary basis of health promotion. It could do more to clarify issues of interdisciplinarity. It is nevertheless, a valuable source for students and practitioners with an interest in health.

FAITH G DELANEY

Senior Lecturer,

*Faculty of Health and Social Care,
Leeds Metropolitan University.*

Sexual behaviour and networking: anthropological and socio-cultural studies on the transmission of HIV. Ed T Dyson. (Pp 375; price not given.) Liege: 1992. IUUSTP, 1992. ISBN 2-87040-046-2.

Contributions to a seminar hosted by the Committee on Anthropological Demography (IUSSP) in 1990 have been collated by the editor of this volume, Tim Dyson, who introduces a range of papers, focusing on sexual behaviour in various African regions (11 of 17 papers). The volume contains a number of excellent articles on a range of topics, including mathematical modelling of transmission, reviews of problems that must be addressed by policy makers, and pioneering attempts to integrate different methods of research.

The potential uses of simple survey data are illustrated effectively while the problems of generalisation from such data are summarised cogently. The quality of individual contributions, however, is uneven. Some are based on careful empirical research. For example, Hogsborg and Aaby report a methodologically sophisticated study combining baseline and follow up survey data, diary and ethnographic data. On the basis of their study, they are able to provide a highly relevant cautionary note on "core groups". They emphasise the importance of empirical work to establish whether or not "core groups" exist in different places before accepting conventional wisdom on their general importance to HIV transmission. In contrast, other papers rely upon inadequate data, anecdote, and theoretically unexamined concepts of culture, behaviour, tradition, and modernity.

In common with many publications from symposia, there is little thematic unity or, indeed, agreement on key terms such as networkings. A dialogue between the authors on central issues would have been helpful. For example, the paper by Schoepf includes a discussion of the attribution of cultural norms to various ethnic groups or to sub-Saharan Africa generally. As several other papers in this volume catalogue such norms, including contributions by J and P Caldwell

who Schoepf specifically takes to task for their previous "single, virtually timeless model for all sub-Saharan Africa", the lack of discussion creates acute problems of continuity. Such problems are equally apparent in discussions of particular aspects of sexual behaviour. In the African context, polygamy is variously seen to promote or inhibit HIV transmission. It is difficult to evaluate these claims as the authors bring different kinds of data and theoretical considerations to bear upon the question. Further editing might have resolved some of these problems, as well as removing unnecessary repetition, for example, on epidemiological finds about AIDS in Africa. Maps and an index would have been useful too.

Despite these problems, the book includes papers of importance to those involved in HIV research, particularly social scientists and epidemiologists, and provides a useful update of much work in progress.

SOPHIE DAY

*Academic Department of Public Health,
St Mary Hospital Medical School,
London*

The Community Health Worker. Ed. S Frankel (pp291; £17.50). New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. ISBN 0-19-261761-3.

The training of villagers to offer basic health services to local communities is an important feature of health provision in many developing countries. This book assesses the current status of community health workers and their future role within health services.

It begins with a comprehensive overview by the editor, followed by individual chapters from various contributors, outlining the situation concerning community health workers in countries from Africa, South America, Asia and Indonesia.

It is argued that the question is no longer whether community health workers are important for the provision of health care but rather how best to achieve their potential. The outcome of a community health worker depends on the links between the health sector and the community, with the community health worker being seen as a bridge between the two. In the overview, an analysis is presented of the various components identified as important for the success of a programme, namely adequate support for the community health worker in areas such as supervision and continuing education, opportunities for patient referral and the availability of a regular supply of drugs. The features of a community health worker programme are then considered. Should the community health worker be acting in a mainly curative role or one of health promotion? Patterns of financing, hours of work, recruitment and training are discussed and the urgent need for evaluation of programmes is highlighted.

This is followed by accounts of the situation in individual countries. Descriptions of the background and development of community health worker programmes serve to reinforce the vital role played by the political forces in a country. In China, the socio-economic reforms of the last decade led to a situation which threatened the very survival of the community health worker in the newly changed society. The problems of interaction between state and community are highlighted in the Indian situation where a campaign