

guide to primary health care reviews. It is also not clear whether it is aimed at those who may be involved in the planning and implementing of such a review, or as background, explanatory material for health workers who would be expected to participate and cooperate in the data collection. It gives an idealised model, with very little attention to the snags and difficulties in planning, executing and interpreting such an exercise. As the introduction states that it is drawing on practical experience it seems a shame that practical difficulties and possible pitfalls are not included.

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Methodology for Genetic Studies of Twins and Families. M C Neale, L R Cardon. (Pp 496; £99.00) Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992. ISBN 0-7923-1874-9.

For ethical and practical reasons, researchers in human behavioural genetics cannot experimentally manipulate their subjects, and must therefore resort to complex modelling and path-analytical approaches in order to tease out the relative contributions of genes and environment to multifactorial traits. This book aims to teach researchers how to analyse and interpret the twin and family studies that have long provided the basic data for these approaches. The treatment is limited to *linear* structural models and is strongly biased towards the use of LISREL software, without access to which the reader's understanding would be severely restricted. It was written largely on the basis of the authors' experience in running a series of week long workshops on twin methodology.

How well it succeeds in its aims is debatable. Several key concepts are introduced in an exceedingly cursory fashion. Thus, standardised variables (p 91), eigen-values (p 77), and the difficult (for the non-numerate) notion of the asymptotic variance-covariance of a sample correlation (p 127) all make their appearance without previous or concurrent discussion. Even the fundamental concept of correlation between twins (p 39) is introduced without making the distinction between ordered and unordered pairs. Certain errors may confuse the uninitiated. For example, figure 17.1 omits arrows connecting the paternal additive genetic factor to one twin, and the corresponding maternal factor to the other. On the other hand, for the more numerate reader who is not put off by these deficiencies, the book does provide a comprehensive and generally lucid overview of the capabilities of current path-analytical techniques.

For these reasons the book will probably succeed better as a course text than as a stand-alone introduction for researchers without a strong statistical background. A minor irritation is the small font size which, at 500 words to the page, makes prolonged reading very unpleasant.

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Risk-takers: Alcohol, Drugs, Sex and Youth. M Plant, M Plant. (Pp 176; £35.00 hb, £10.99 pb) Tavistock: Routledge, 1992. ISBN 0-415-03539-2.

"Our problem is to reconcile the things we enjoy with the damage these pleasures can inflict". (M and M Plant)
The Plants have produced a readable and

informative book on some of the major health policy concerns regarding young people today – drugs, alcohol, smoking, and sex. Although this book is useful for everyone working in these fields, it is probably most useful for managers of services who know very little about the subject matter.

This is essentially a comprehensive review of the current literature surrounding substance use and sex, and attempts to relate this information to the studies and theories of the behaviour of young people. The book is readable throughout but gets really interesting in the latter stages when the authors attempt to synthesise the information and draw out some conclusions for the benefit of policymakers.

The central thesis of the book is the pessimistic, though realistic, view that behaviour change is extremely difficult (though not impossible). They begin by stating that the motivations behind substance use and sexual activity are extremely powerful. The authors show that people enjoy risk-taking, risk-taking happens in all areas of life, and all risk-taking is interconnected – risk-taking is a normal activity for everyone, not just young people.

The authors believe their conclusions have "profound implications for policymakers". However, they do not go into this in any detail, except to state that traditional policies towards illicit drug users and prostitution need to be re-thought so that they are not promoting the spread of HIV. They are, however, scathing about government propaganda and exhortation (eg, "Just Say No" campaign) pleading that this should not be confused with health education.

Who should buy this book? All health promotion managers should purchase this book for their managers and funders.

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