

of health, such tools do not attain the degree of rigour demanded of a precise scientific instrument. More worryingly, the text could also be criticised from the very perspective that it intends to promote. It could be argued that a fundamental tension exists between the relatively enlightened thoughts on concepts of health contained within the introductory chapter and the highly formal and quantified tools that subsequently follow. In reviewing discrepancies between the SF-36 measure of general health and associated qualitative assessments of health, Hill, Harries, and Popay¹ have already suggested that irrespective of any intended sensitivity, quantitative tools can never match the subtlety gained from more open ended methods. This tension is left largely unresolved in the text.

Bowling herself points out that it is easy to criticise established tools. It is also arguable that in a policy context which demands quantitative data to inform decision making, such tools are practical, pragmatic, and inherently useful. If this is the case, Bowling's book provides an important step towards the development of measures of quality of life that are both sensitive and rigorous.

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NOTICES

International Congress on Women, Work and Health. Barcelona, 18/20 April 1996. For further information, please contact: Dona, Salut i Qualitat de Vida, C/Paris 150 1º 2º, Barcelona 08036, Spain. Tel/fax: 322 65 54.

16th International Congress of Nutrition. Montreal, QC, Canada, 27 July-1 August 1997. For further information, please contact: Congress Secretariat, IUNS '97, National Research Council Canada, Building M-19, Montreal Road, Ottawa, ON, Canada K1A 0R6. Tel: (613) 993-7271. Fax: (613) 993-7250.

16th Annual New England Epidemiology Summer Program. 10 June-5 July 1996, 5 and 10 day courses at Tufts University in Medford/Boston, Massachusetts. For more information contact: The New England Epidemiology Institute, Dept PA-JECH, One Newton Executive Park, Newton Lower Falls, MA 02162-1450. Tel: (617) 244-9669; e-mail: epidemiol@aol.com.

Corrigendum

Smoking and health promotion in Nazi Germany

The letter which appeared in October 1995 (49(5):555) was submitted by George Davey Smith and Matthias Egger. The letter is reprinted on p 109.

Society for Social Medicine Abstracts

The abstracts which appeared in the October 1995 issue (vol 49(5):534-54) were from the September 1995 scientific meeting of the Society for Social Medicine, not the 1994 meeting.