

lack of respect, over ready dismissal of patients' own views about their problems, and the powerlessness and fear that many patients feel when in contact with mental health professionals. Williams finishes his chapter by suggesting that there are many latent issues that are not currently being addressed by evaluators of community services, and that the "first stage in such a process is to give users a voice and not just a questionnaire". It is a pity his own voice did not carry as far as the Health Services Research Unit in Bangor.

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**Psychosocial Processes in Health: a Reader.** Edited by Andrew Steptoe & Jane Wardle. 1994. Pp 525. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Hb (ISBN 0521416108) £60.00. Pb (ISBN 0521426189) £24.95

There has been increasing emphasis on the relationship between psychosocial processes and health in recent years and many mental health professionals have been asked to participate in undergraduate medical (and other) courses to elucidate these. While the topic is fascinating, a common difficulty encountered by teachers and students is how to identify papers in the field published in a diverse range of journals. The editors of this text have identified and responded admirably to this problem. This book comprises an edited volume of 31 of the most important papers published on the links between social environment, emotion, behaviour and illness.

To orientate the reader, the authors have divided the book into six sections covering topics ranging from life stress, social support and health; aspects of personality, behaviour and health; to behavioural interventions in medicine. Each theme is set in its clinical or scientific context by an up-to-date review of the literature followed by a set of papers (usually five) covering aspects of the topic. The publications that have been reprinted span the last thirty years and many are classics. For mental health professionals, the sections on psychosocial processes in health, on personality and on behavioural medicine are the most relevant. However, papers in the section on coping with illness include the work

of Steven Greer on psychological aspects of coping with breast cancer, and each section has at least one paper worthy of attention.

Are there any obvious omissions? It is easy to identify other themes that could have been explored. Topics that mental health professionals and particularly psychiatrists may have wished to see included such as the doctor-patient relationship or social inequalities in health would have made lively reading. However, the editors are honest enough to identify other topics that might benefit from exploration, and it is hard to argue that any of the themes chosen should have been dropped to accommodate another subject.

This text comes into its own as a resource book for course organisers and teachers and as a recommended text for students studying medicine, psychology or the health sciences. As access to the relevant research and review papers was previously limited, I anticipate that teachers and students will happily pay the cost of the paperback text and libraries should have one or two hardback copies in the reference section. I found this a valuable text for my own academic work and enjoyed browsing through many of the other pages simply out of interest. It is a valuable addition to a limited field and the editors are to be congratulated for filling this gap.

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**Alcohol Policy and the Public Good.** Griffith Edwards *et al.* Oxford Medical Publications, Oxford University Press. 1995. Pp 226. £14.95.

Professor Griffith Edwards was given the opportunity of leading an international team of social scientists to revisit the terrain covered in an influential earlier work *Alcohol Control Policies in a Public Health Perspective* (Bruun *et al.*, 1975). Various bodies generously supported the endeavour including the Addiction Research Foundation (Toronto), the Finnish Foundation of Alcohol Studies, and the World Health Organization regional office in Europe. The result is an invaluable compendium of evidence that will inform policy makers about effective strategies in preventing alcohol-related harm throughout the world. Given the evidence contained in this