What effect does music have on the mind and body? CH12 proposes a model relating music to the limbic system and CH15 lists a variety of therapeutic uses of music ranging from reducing stress, inducing relaxation and enhancing immune functioning, to more specific interventionist techniques of altering heart rate (entrainment). Whether such events merely influence health as a result of an enjoyable event rather than a specific therapy appears debatable.

Research on the components of music, the therapist's use of the medium and outcome are given wide coverage.

The title of the book is somewhat misleading since it focuses predominantly on mental health, and education only as it relates to learning disability. Some of the claims to 'therapy' are over-ambitious in view of the methodological problems in the outcome studies. Although over-priced for the personal pocket, the book has encouraged me to see a role for music therapy within the traditional composition of the multi-disciplinary team in the mental health field, but whether this is simply as a pleasant and relaxing experience rather than having a deeper therapeutic significance is something of which I am still unsure.

DENISE A. COIA, Consultant Psychiatrist, Florence Street Day Hospital, Glasgow G5 0YX

The Role of General Practice Settings in the Prevention and Management of the Harm done by Alcohol Use. WHO, Copenhagen, 1992

Europe is the continent with the highest alcohol consumption and in some countries the economic burden resulting from alcohol misuse has been estimated as 5-6% of gross national product. The European Alcohol Action Plan was adopted by the regional committee of the World Health Organisation in Europe in September 1992 and aims to stimulate a widespread commitment to reducing alcohol-related harm. One facet of the plan aims to strengthen the contribution of primary health care to the prevention and management of harmful drinking. This brief report from a working group sets the scene for the advancement of this particularly crucial component of the strategy.

Regarding alcohol as a health risk factor fits well within strategies of health promotion and community-based interventions. The feasibility of recognising hazardous and harmful drinking in primary care and the effectiveness of focused interventions is now clear but has yet to be widely accepted.

The case for these developments is thus soundly based but the authors recognise that there are many barriers to effective action including pessimism, lack of skill and a continuing tendency to lapse back into a preoccupation with