

Book News

Adoption and Fostering: New Developments in Childcare Practice and Research (Vol. 25, Nos. 1–4) M. Hill (Ed.)

London: BAAF, 2001. pp. 96. £12.00 (pb) inc. p & p. ISSN: 0-308-5759.

The British Association for Adoption and Fostering has become the clearing house for research, information and informed insight into matters of fostering and adoption, and within these four issues, there is a wide range of approaches.

Sinclair et al. advocate even more flexibility to meet individual needs – ‘never mind performance indicators’. More formally, there are warnings that ECHR legislation may need greater use of interim care orders and courts’ extended supervision of local authority care plans.

There are many short, readable book reviews that give at least an introduction to each work. Legal comment is more thorough, as it should be. Of particular relevance to *CAMH* readers is the continuing concern that ‘help’ for children in care is even harder to come by than for other children. Mimis et al. find that services are even diminishing.

This is very much a users’ journal and the research items have this practical orientation. As someone working with children who are facing the loss of parents, I found useful comments, good insights, and a lot of articles that I ought to find time to read.

Pam Keen
Exeter

Congenital Hemiplegia

B. Neville & R. Goodman (Eds.)

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. pp. 216. £40.00 (hb). ISBN: 1-898-68319-0.

This excellent volume in the Clinics in Developmental Medicine series provides a comprehensive evaluation of the antecedents and consequences of congenital hemiplegia. The 15 chapters are generally clear and concise, covering a wide range of relevant topics from classification, investigation, treatment and service provision. There is a clear message conveyed of the need for a greater specification of the underlying patho-

physiology. However, equally important is the delineation of the ubiquitous and ill-defined ‘learning disability’, if we are to improve the educational provision for these children. A greater specification and understanding of the disorder will, of course, lead to more accurate prognosis, a matter of critical importance not only to service provision but to the family from the very early stages as Goodman correctly points out. Discussion of the psychosocial consequences and service provision highlight the importance of a common knowledge base among all those who care for these children. This text goes some way to meeting that need and it should be compulsory reading for all professional groups in health, education and social services.

David A. Johnson
Edinburgh

Child Psychiatry and Child Protection Legislation

J. Brophy, with L. Brown, S. Cohen, & P. Radcliffe

London: Gaskell/RCP, 2001. pp. 134. £20 (hb). ISBN: 1-910242-668.

This is an important book for anyone in any field concerned with the quality of decision making processes and support for children caught up in public law proceedings. There is something anomalous about a book on child psychiatric experts in Child Care Proceedings being written by a socio-legal researcher but this perspective, from outside of our discipline, makes it particularly interesting. Brophy bases her extensive comments on several large studies she has completed on such proceedings and the role of experts in them. In addition, she interviewed 17 of the experts, randomly selected but representing both ‘local’ and ‘national’ experts, in a detailed way.

The book offers a description of the rapidly changing scene since the Children Act was introduced 10 years ago. It has continued to change rapidly and to do so for several years after her studies. The fact that she fails to give dates of the study periods makes her findings more difficult to evaluate. As she acknowledges, some of her work is out of date: an obvious example is that, in her study, most experts were instructed

by a single party, which is now the exception to the rule (joint instructions having become the norm).

Brophy sees child psychiatrists as playing a central part in these proceedings, Lord Justice Thorpe, in the introduction, states ‘the bond between the judge and any expert concerned with child health and development is particularly close since in some degree they share the daunting task of deciding the future of the child’. That statement is more controversial than anything Brophy herself concludes and she makes reference to the growing anxiety amongst experts that the single expert does not allow for peer review and full challenge i.e., in my terms, holds too much power.

Brophy outlines what child psychiatric experts bring to proceedings and she makes extensive proposals for the future: ‘The new legal agenda’. This is sound, and addresses problems of supply, of standards and training, of how to interest, involve and avoid frightening off trainees, of policy and funding and the risk that the new consultant contract will further reduce the pool of available experts. She covers issues surrounding the use of the evidence base for expert opinions and the need for further clinical, but Court related, research. The clinical dilemma of being accountable to the Court and not to the patient is discussed, together with the tensions between assessment only and therapeutic interventions during the assessment process. She raises the debate about whether the use of local expertise would better bridge the gap between the great need but very limited supply of therapeutic services and the debate concerning professional dilemmas that arise when Court assessments occur within ongoing therapeutic relationships.

She deals with other non-psychiatric issues of protecting children through the judicial system and the balance between investment in good clinical input to the Courts versus earlier multi-agency work to support families and avoid the need of referring to Court.

As a whole, this book makes very worthwhile reading for anyone interested in this area of work – whether they are already involved or weighing up the merits and demerits of such involvement. It contains good basic grounding

in the law and of the why and how, the tasks and practicalities of expert work, and the views of those involved at the time of her study: most of the issues raised still pertain and will continue to be the core issues in this work.

I hope the book, as well as serving those of us interested in this work, will influence both the Government and the Royal College of Psychiatrists. The lack of guidance and policy in our profession and at the Department about this work, its place in main stream practice, the lack of clarity on training, standards and accountability all add a further burden to those trying to help children in this way.

*J. C. Sturge
Harrow, Middlesex*

Children and the Law Ray Bull (Ed.)

Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. pp. 432.
£15.99 (pb). ISBN: 0-631-22682-6.

As stated in the Introduction, this book is designed to help the reader to 'take a multifaceted psychological approach, set in a multi disciplinary context'. The book is written for a wide audience working with children within the legal context, and therefore does not deal with the specific contributions of different disciplines to the particular process. The editor emphasises the 'crucial link' that 'it may largely be victimised children who go on to commit crime, including child abuse', but for me this was not a strong message, and the utility of the book lies rather in the reviews and discussions of the particular topics addressed.

The book is well set out and the format of five parts subdivided into sections is easy to use. The five parts are Child victimisation; Reliability of children's accounts; Truth and lies; Children and the legal system; and Children as perpetrators. The senior authors are well known and distinguished in their fields, and doubtless well referenced in expert court reports in many countries. This book certainly provides a useful way to refer to these essential works and the discussions are well worth considering.

The book opens with the classic works of David Finkelhor and colleagues, well known and well referenced. The second and third parts contain useful new work as well as reviews and discussion of older publications. The fourth part is a consideration of children's testimony,

raising many questions about the legal system and the effectiveness with which children are served. Part five considers children as perpetrators and the key findings from the first decade of the Pittsburgh Youth Study are fascinating reading. The research review by Vizard et al. is well written and referenced.

I would recommend this book to the readership for which it is designed. In my opinion, it would be unwise to venture into court where this work is relevant without having read it.

*Carole A. Kaplan
Newcastle-upon-Tyne*

Culture, Health and Illness (4th Ed.) C. G. Helman

London: Edward Arnold Publishers,
2001. pp. 328. £19.99 (pb). ISBN:
0-7506-4786-8.

This book can be highly recommended as a comprehensive overview of medical anthropology written for health practitioners. It has excellent chapters on gender and reproduction, diet and nutrition, and cross-cultural psychiatry. The focus is primarily on adult rather than child populations, but it will make those who work with children more alert to the cultural issues that abound in the provision of health care. At a cost of £19.99, it's a real bargain.

*Leon Eisenberg
Boston, USA*

Attention, Genes and ADHD F. Levy & D. Hay (Eds.)

Hove: Brunner/Routledge Publishers,
2001. pp. 272. £30.00 (hb). ISBN:
1-84169-193-3.

A massive Australian national survey of child twins and their siblings in 1991 provided the basis for a quantitative genetic study – the Australian Twin ADHD Project (ATAP). This study is reported in detail, together with several thoughtful chapters by Australians, Americans, Canadians and Brits on different ways of analysing the data or the implications for future research and practice.

Most of the basic ATAP findings have been previously reported in Journals (including this one). Readers will not find that much in the way of hard fact that is new. The core finding is, in this as in other work, very high heritability for ADHD (DSM-III type). What is good about the book are the occasional pen-

etrating remarks, based on data. Three that I liked were: 'Evidence to date suggests that ADHD is best interpreted as the end of a continuum throughout the entire population.' (p. 27); 'The best summary of developmental perspective on ADHD is that there is no single outcome.' (p. 69); and 'Genetic findings tend to point to a wider diagnostic concept.' (than hyperkinetic disorder – p. 226).

Readers will not find ground-breaking molecular genetic data here (though there is a good chapter on methods and findings up to 1999). What they will get is a good challenge to thought. I am not sure that many will buy it but it should be in the library of any institution carrying out behavioural genetic research on children.

*Peter Hill
London*

Being Alive: Building on the Work of Anne Alvarez J. Edwards (Ed.)

Hove: Brunner/Routledge, 2001.
pp. 210. £16.99 (pb). ISBN: 1-5839-1131-6.

For many years Anne Alvarez has taught various aspects of psychoanalytic child psychotherapy at the Tavistock Clinic, London and is also well known internationally. Her book, *Live company*, published in 1992 describing her work with autistic children and those with severe personality disorders, was a landmark. Her second book (edited with Susan Reid), *Autism and personality* (1999), further developed her ideas.

Professor Peter Fonagy, one of the authors in this tribute volume to Alvarez, summarises her contribution as follows: 'She traces the development of psychoanalytic ideas of therapeutic action from a one-person depth psychology to an interpersonal perspective, modifying Kleinian thought as she goes in the direction of increasing concern with live relationships. She draws our attention to two changes in our understanding of therapeutic action: (a) the way in which the aim of lifting repressive barriers has been supplanted by a process that involves extending the boundaries of the self to include the regaining of lost, split-off parts by means of analytic containment, and (b) the development of a meta-theory which is more relational, less mechanistic and more able to accommodate novelty and the "mentalness of mind".'

Further, Alvarez has enabled the often opposing psychoanalytic theories of psychic change to converge, leading to a more common idea about how to bring this about. Perhaps some of the most exciting developments are the links made with contemporary research on the brain, developmental psychology and attachment theory. (Such links with other disciplines are unusual in much psychoanalytic writing). The chapter by Allan N. Schore entitled 'Neurobiology, developmental psychology, and psychoanalysis' is an important example. Here the author discusses the primitive process of unconscious communication and defences that starts in early infancy and continues throughout life, in relation to all three disciplines. There are echoes here of much contemporary research and writing on the importance of maternal receptivity and containment in the first few months of life.

Discussion of Alvarez' original theoretical and clinical ideas is the starting point of most of the chapters, as the contributors, from various parts of Europe, North America and Australia, have attempted, in their clinical and theoretical work, to use, evaluate and take them further. There is much detailed case material presented showing how her teaching changed the authors' ways of working, leading to more positive therapeutic results.

Thus this book could be very useful to clinicians struggling with their own severely disturbed patients as well as to others interested in understanding how exciting contemporary psychoanalytic theory can be in the context of other disciplines where new knowledge is rapidly expanding our understanding of the human mind.

*Lynn Barnett
Devon*

Adolescent Psychiatry in Clinical Practice

S. Gowers (Ed.)

London: Edward Arnold, 2001. pp. 560. £45.00 (hb). ISBN: 0-340-76384-1.

I discovered this welcome new volume on adolescent psychiatry shortly after returning to in-patient adolescent services after many years in the community. I had already purchased my own copy when the review copy arrived. Both volumes are now well used, one being a bench book in the unit, the other travelling frequently between home and work. This is a multi-authored text book with a comprehensive approach and it has been tightly edited with an appealing and logical structure. There are 22 chapters in four sections – background, disorders, services and treatment.

Text books on adolescent psychiatry, like adolescence itself, can suffer from fuzzy boundaries; it is difficult to avoid material that is more germane to general texts of child and adolescent psychiatry, for example in describing ethical and legal issues, primary care and community services and approaches to treatment. The approach here though is fairly successful in keeping a firm focus on the adolescent period whilst including enough general material e.g. potted guides to family therapy, to cover the needs of the general reader. This has been achieved probably at the expense of brevity, although this can be excused as the volume is essentially a reference book. It is difficult to pick out individual chapters and praise them, although I particularly enjoyed and found useful the chapters on psychotic disorders, assessment and ethical and legal issues. The limitations of chapters and textbooks designed to cover all possibilities was more evident in the section on Adolescent Psychopharmacology, which was really too brief to serve as anything more than a general guide. Practitioners of this will need to refer to more detailed text for specific guidance on programs of treatment.

In conclusion, this is an excellent text that will be of great use to all working in adolescent psychiatric community and inpatient settings and is thoroughly recommended.

*Patrick Byrne
London*

A Clinical Guide to Sleep Disorders in Children and Adolescents

G. Stores (Ed.)

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. pp. 196. £27.95 (pb). ISBN: 0-521-65398-3.

This is a scholarly and comprehensive, albeit brief guide aimed at a cross disciplinary audience of non-specialist professionals. The author seeks to redress the adult focused research and paucity of succinct professional education on this topic.

Key chapters address: general issues, basic aspects of sleep, sleeplessness, excessive sleepiness and parasomnias. The approach is developmental, considering the natural history, assessment and intervention in relation to the child's age as well as sleep disorder type. There is a good review of assessment approaches although some of these will only be realistic in specialist centres. The book comes alive with the liberal sprinkling of detailed case studies covering a wide range of ages and conditions, illustrating both assessment and intervention. The case studies contain encouraging descriptions of intervention with unpromising cases as well as the realism of everyday clinical practice – unsatisfactory progress with some children and families. The three key chapters on the major types of sleep disorder finish with useful summary checklists supported by a comprehensive reference list.

The author is somewhat too concerned to advance his thesis that sleep disorders are complicated and neglected: they can be and are but, as he ably illustrates, simple well informed intervention procedures can be remarkably effective. There is a substantial glossary but the use of medical terms and acronyms will render it less accessible to the non-specialist, non-medical practitioner. Overall, once I had progressed beyond the initial chapters, I found this an informative overview with a useful place as a reference text in any departmental library.

*Steve Jones
Stafford*