

Book Reviews

Diabetes Health Care.

A Guide to the Provision of Health Care Services. R. D. Hill, 1987. London: Chapman and Hall Medical. Price £15.00.

Only 20 years ago diabetic clinics had little to offer their patients other than the manipulation of therapies in an attempt to improve blood glucose control. Diabetic retinopathy was an interesting clinical finding displaying the skill of the clinician, but with an inevitable progression; little could be done for nephropathy once detected but to watch the inexorable decline in renal function; any yet to dawn was the full awareness of the role of the patient in management of their diabetes with the increasing demands of education that this would entail.

Recent developments highlight the changes which have come about placing greater emphasis upon screening, early detection of complications and management of other aspects of retinopathy, nephropathy and macrovascular disease such as smoking, hypertension and lipids. And, particularly, it is now apparent that the patient can be enlisted to help in the day-to-day management provided that they are given the necessary information and support.

Yet still the traditional diabetic clinic lumbers on—ill-equipped to meet the new challenges, still with tunnel vision for blood glucose manipulation, and too busy doing the work to have time to think of aims and goals. This book is an attempt to drag the clinic, kicking and screaming, no doubt, up to date, ready and organized to meet the new responsibilities. Here, Ron Hill sets out the organization of diabetic care largely as it is practised in Poole where he works, and gives the rest of us not only an example which can be followed but an aim for our own clinics.

The reader will learn something of the disease, diabetes mellitus, and its complications but it is not, nor was it intended to be, a textbook of diabetes. Rather, the factual approach is only to set the scene delineating the problems in order that a framework for care can be built upon. There are specific chapters on education, follow-up, the role of the nurse and organization of health care. There are also chapters on specific diabetic complications but the approach is one which stresses prevention, documentation, plans of action and organizing care to

emphasize the importance of detection and management.

The great strengths of the book are its firm foundation in the considerable clinical experience of the writer and that the writing is solidly based on knowledge from experience. Ron Hill has brought his own clinic to the point where it can begin to meet the demands of diabetic care today. Now he tackles the more difficult task of persuading colleagues of the need to reorganize their care. I, for one, am convinced of the correctness of the message and the usefulness of the template he gives. I am sure that you will find the message rings true if you heed my advice to buy this most useful book.

MALCOLM NATTRASS
General Hospital,
Birmingham

Easy Cooking for One or Two. Louise Davies, 1987. London: Penguin. Price £2.95.

The popularity of this book has already been proven by more than 20 reprints in 15 years, but it is a pleasure to welcome a new edition which takes into account much of the thinking in nutrition over the last 10 or more years.

Easy Cooking for One or Two has become a classic and it is widely read by students and other younger people cooking on their own, even though it is designed for older people: the first chapter spells out the elements of nutrition for this age group. People who can keep up an interest in food, or can exercise choice in their shopping and eating, will not become bored and will thus more easily maintain their nutritional status. How well Louise Davies' book illustrates this, giving lots of useful ideas and encouraging people to get out of that rut about food that happens so easily when cooking alone.

The chapter 'Nutrition on your own' is a useful checklist for those of us who are involved in training sessions for carers or who talk to groups of older people. Topics such as 'Are you eating too little?', 'Are you including high fibre foods?', and 'Are you drinking enough fluid?' are all covered in a straightforward way. Fluid, particularly, is a subject which arouses interest in groups of old and young alike. I would have liked to see a recommended daily fluid intake included, as the amount I suggest (1.5 litres, or

8 to 10 cups/day) often surprises both professionals and lay people. Many people ask about nutritional supplements, and I was pleased to see that this subject is included in this chapter too. I endorse Louise Davies' opinion that 'food is more enjoyable than supplements'.

The recipes are very laid out, each one on a single page, in large print and with some line drawings. They include several one-pot dishes, some new lower-fat recipes, a chapter on 'Favourites from the Cookery Classes' and 'Cooking for non-cooks'. The chapters are arranged so that each kind of dish (main course and sweet, etc.) appear in each chapter; and there is a clear index at the beginning of each chapter as well as at the end. As we will all have recommended elderly people to keep a store cupboard for emergencies, it is good to see a chapter of recipes making use of such stocks. The weights of the ingredients are given in Imperial measures, but there is a final section which has much useful information including measurements without scales.

This new edition deserves the same success as the previous ones; it is a sign of the times that my 1974 copy cost a mere 40 p., whereas this one now costs £2.95!

JOAN SCRIVEN

Health Care Team for the Elderly,
St Mary Abbots Hospital,
London.

Xenobiosis, foods, drugs and poisons in the Human Body. A. Albert, London: Chapman & Hall. ISBN 0-412-28810-9, Paperback. Price £13.95.

The book is divided into three sections—foods, drugs and poisons. The section on foods is disappointing and provides little more than standard textbooks on nutrition. It catalogues the metabolism of foods and the occurrence of naturally occurring toxicants. It fails to discuss the influence of diet (protein, fat and carbohydrate intake) on the metabolism of xenobiotics. The sections on drugs and poisons are much better and are well-written. The scientific basis of chemotherapy is well covered. There is an excellent section on pharmacokinetics. I particularly enjoyed the section on poisoning, which deals with the basic principles of toxicology,

accidental poisoning, pollution and poisons absorbed through eating and drinking. The book is well referenced and illustrated and has an interesting historical perspective; at £13.50 it represents excellent value.

T. A. B. SANDERS

Nutrition Dept.,
Kings College London,
Campden Hill Rd., London W8

The Everyman Companion to Food and Nutrition. Sheila Bingham, 1987. London and Melbourne: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., ISBN 0-460-03038-8. Price £25.00.

This authoritative and well-researched book provides information on 400 different entries of food and nutrients. Information is presented in a clear and concise form, and details of nutrition analysis derived, for the most part, from McCance and Widdowson's *Composition of Foods* are given for 250 of the foods.

The entries are arranged in alphabetical order, with a list of contents at the beginning. For those readers who may be unfamiliar with nutritional terminology, the numerous cross-references typed in bold are particularly useful. As with all publications of this nature there are omissions, but these tend to be in more specialist areas of nutrition.

Additional information on Recommended Daily Intakes and E numbers of Food Additives is given in an appendix, and throughout the text references are made to relevant books and journals. A comprehensive bibliography is given at the end of the book for those who may wish to read more extensively on some of the subjects covered. A list of recognized scientific periodicals is also given, which will be useful for the non-nutrition expert with a scientific background.

This publication is a reliable and up to date source of information for the layman with limited nutritional knowledge, and an easy-to-use reference source for nutritionists and dietitians. A valuable addition to the bookshelf.

SUSAN J. GATENBY

Nutrition Dept.,
Kings College London,
Campden Hill Rd., London W8