

counseling process. The next several chapters examine how this counseling process can be applied to common problems encountered in family medical practice, such as stress-related medical disorders, patient compliance, marital and sexual problems, parent-child problems, chemical substance abuse, depression, and anxiety. The case examples and transcripts of counseling sessions further demonstrate the authors' assessment and treatment approach. The chapter on treating chemical dependency was obviously written by a family practitioner who has kept up with developments in the field and knows how and when to use community resources in working with problems of substance abuse. It becomes clear to the reader that the authors have had considerable experience in applying their primary care family-counseling model.

The final chapter covers some of the practical issues and problems involved in setting up a family-oriented approach to health care. A case example of a physician successfully implementing a family-systems-based medical practice is presented. The inclusion of additional case examples—such as a case in which the physician is not as successful in implementing a primary care family-counseling model, or one in which the practice is established in an urban setting or different organizational context—would be helpful in demonstrating the problems involved in setting up such a practice. To the reviewer, this chapter seems incomplete; although the problems of organizational and time constraints, adequate financial reimbursement, and practitioner training are touched upon, they seem too simplified, perhaps due to the authors' enthusiasm for their model.

For those readers that share the authors' perspective toward a family-systems approach to health care, this book is an excellent resource. For those readers that do not accept this perspective, the book raises additional questions regarding the role of the family practitioner in treating psychosocial problems.

Kathleen A. Rounds, M.S.W., M.P.H.
School of Public Health
University of Michigan

Society and Medication: Conflicting Signals for Prescribers and Patients

John P. Morgan and Doreen V. Kagan, eds.,
Lexington Books, DC Heath and Company,
Lexington, Massachusetts, 1983

Prescribing a drug for a particular patient involves a complicated decision-making process on the part of the physician. The physician first thoroughly analyzes the information about the patient, received from history taking, physical examination, laboratory tests, or the medical chart. This information is used to make a medical

diagnosis of the patient's problem. Once the diagnosis is made, the physician selects the appropriate drug or nondrug therapy (or both) to treat the condition.

That is the way it is supposed to be done. Unfortunately, numerous studies have indicated that the process is rarely as rational as just described. Rather, frequent errors occur either in making a wrong diagnosis or selecting the wrong treatment.

Many scientists and health professionals have examined physician-prescribing behavior to better understand why such problems occur. Some researchers have focused on the clinical aspects of the process by addressing the proper diagnosis of diseases and by identifying the most appropriate drugs for a specific disease state. Others have concentrated on broader issues such as the effects of public policy and societal values on the use of prescribed drugs. The book edited by Morgan and Kagan contains 27 papers (originally presented at a 1981 symposium on drug prescribing) which generally approach drug prescribing from the "broad-issue" perspective. The topics vary considerably but are divided into seven major headings: National Perspectives, Pharmacy, Psychoactive Issues, Educating Consumers, Educating Prescribers and Future Prescribers, and Characterizing and Modifying Prescriber Behavior. The authors of each paper are prominent in the fields they discuss.

While most of the discussions are interesting, the inconsistency in writing style among the different authors detracts from the cohesiveness necessary to present a unified perspective on the issue of drug prescribing. This book will undoubtedly provide valuable information to individuals unfamiliar with certain aspects of drug-prescribing. However, it lacks sufficient information to give an adequate overview of this process.

Frank J. Ascione, Pharm.D., Ph.D.
College of Pharmacy
University of Michigan

Peer Counseling: Skills and Perspectives

Vincent J. D'Andrea and Peter Salovey,
Science and Behavior Books,
Palo Alto, California, 1983

The material in this book is presented in two parts which individually could be used for course contents. Part I, *Peer Counseling Skills*, identifies specific counseling skill areas, illustrates these skills with concrete examples and situations, and links these skills with a convincing rationale for establishing peer-counseling groups. Part II, *Special Perspectives in Peer Counseling*, illustrates special circumstances which peer counselors may encounter. It also addresses cultural and ethnic issues and belief systems and their effects on framing, thinking, and solving personal problems.