physical examination of the spine and extremities

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PHYSICAL EXAMINATION OF THE SPINE AND EXTREMITIES is a functional guidebook, through which clinicians and students can rapidly assimilate the basic knowledge essential to the actual physical examination of the spine and extremities. Dr. Hoppenfeld has carefully incorporated three important features: 1) a tight, consistent organization; 2) an abundance of constructive illustrations; and 3) an effective teaching method.

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work to residents and record gratitude for the enormous effort that must have been necessary to produce such a scholarly yet superbly practical work.

Brian W. McGuinness, MD
Liverpool, England

The Relaxation Response. *Herbert Benson. William Morrow and Company, West Caldwell, New Jersey, 1975, 158 pp., $5.95.*

It is with great enthusiasm that this reviewer recommends this book to physicians and selected patients interested in the area of stress-related illness. Dr. Benson gives us a well-organized and delightfully written book dealing with the problem of stress in our lives. It is written in language understandable to those not medically sophisticated, but nonetheless contains clear presentation of the scientific data on the physiology of emotional stress. He suggests a mechanism by which all of us can decompress our lives and describes the salutory effects that can be expected from regular elicitation of a natural process which he calls the relaxation response.

Essentially, he demystifies the process of meditation and legitimizes it for the Western mind. His analysis of the essentials in the meditative process, as derived from a study of use of meditation in various cultures, can be widely implemented by physicians as a therapeutic tool in the care of patients. The emphasis is on the prevention and control of cardiovascular disease. The physiologic equivalents of the subjective sense of well-being experienced – reduction in oxygen consumption, blood pressure, and heart rate, for example – are discussed. The book is short and to the point, allowing the widest reader acceptance. It should be a monumental help to physicians in their attempt to introduce patients to a means of invoking relaxation and its therapeutic benefits. An in-depth bibliography is included allowing for ease of research into the physiologic and psychologic responses to stress and their amelioration by meditation. Certainly in this era of emphasis on nonpharmacologic approaches to anxiety and tension (evidenced by the current interest in biofeedback), this monograph is most timely and useful.

Edward M. Neal, MD
Healdsburg, California

Chronic Illness in Children: Its Impact on Child and Family. *Georgia Travis. Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1976, 556 pp., $19.50.*

The author, Georgia Travis, was Professor of Social Work at San Diego State University and is currently associated with the Institute for Medical Research of Santa Clara County, California. She has served as a medical social consultant with federal, state, and local agencies.

The objective of this reference book is to provide social work practitioners and students with information about the psychosocial implications of various chronic illnesses in children. Mrs. Travis rightfully feels that the worker needs a framework of basic medical information in order to understand the practical problems and emotional burdens facing family and child, and the effect of illness on family relationships. The medical information, in order to be meaningful and useful to her audience, is presented in lay terms and related to fundamentals of child development and family service. Utilizing medical specialists and a large literary resource file evidenced by a 38-page bibliography, Mrs. Travis wrote the book which she, herself, had been unable to find on the library shelves.

The work is well-organized, authoritative, and thorough. The orienting theoretical chapters lay forth the au-

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thor's premises, concepts, and her own biases, and raise extremely thought-provoking issues. Chapters six through 18 deal with representative chronic disease conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, leukemia, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, and others, and are written with minimal technical jargon. Each of the latter chapters is broken down into sections on "Medical Realities" and "Psychosocial Implications."

The theories presented are based on the writer's view of man as a biopsychosocial organism who is in constant interaction with his environment.

The concept of experience was selected to best exemplify the ways children and their families live with chronic illness; the concept of stress, because illness is stress.

The writer's personal bias, as stated, is toward prevention. Unlike many other human service professionals who believe in complete personal freedom of parents in mating, she feels that the unborn child's right to avoid a miserable life should be considered if there is known sex-linked genetic disease.

The recurrent subject touched upon in different guises is that of bioethics, or the philosophy of life and death. This timely topic is most frequently and cautiously approached in dealing with aging, suicide, and intractable pain in adults. One cannot be exposed to severe chronic illness in children for very long, without encountering the same question. Some readers might disagree, perhaps strongly, with the way the author treats the problem. From long experience accumulated with painful, miserable lives, Mrs. Travis seems to have concluded that concern should embrace most deeply the quality of life rather than mere length of life.

Overlooking the simplified discussion of the chronic medical conditions, the book is worthy reading for family physicians, pediatricians, and behavioral scientists. Its main and important value will be to other members of the health-care team – health planning officials, social workers, nurses, and clergy.

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