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Margaret Jackson. She has added a useful list of county clinics and national organisations in the United Kingdom, and another of books on sex education for adolescents and adults.

Ruth D'Arcy Hart

Cancer

*Cancer in Childhood and Youth*, by Sigismund Peller, MD, FRSH. Bristol: John Wright & Sons Ltd, 1960. Illustrated. Pp 280 and Indices. 42s.

The preface to this book, which is a sequel to *Cancer in Man*, published in 1952 by the International Universities Press of New York, contains so many unorthodox, dogmatic, and astonishing statements that one is tempted to dip further into its pages.

Few would disagree with the view expressed in the second chapter that cancers in early childhood are unlikely to be due to exposure to postnatal environmental influences. At the same time few would be prepared to agree that therefore such cancers "may very well be the response to intrafoetal actions of cancerogens". According to the author the fact that leukaemia is one of the most common neoplasms of childhood is due to the ready accessibility of the vascular endothelium to carcinogens reaching the foetus via the placenta. In the next two chapters he gives theoretical reasons for the non-mixing of blood-streams in the right foetal atrium. As a result of this postulated non-mixing, some sites are more accessible to exogenous carcinogens than others. This difference, he concludes, accounts for the peculiar distribution of childhood tumours.

Recent studies in mice do not support these ideas. The injection of polyoma virus into foetal or new-born mice, or of a potent chemical carcinogen into new-born mice, produces a wide spectrum of tumours of many sites, accessible and inaccessible. In this case ingenuity would have to transcend common sense if the siting of tumours had to be related to blood-streaming. Nevertheless in Chapter xvii Peller writes, "Epidemiology does not provide decisive evidence for or

against viral aetiology of human cancer. Epidemiological facts are compatible with that aetiology, provided the virus (or viruses): (a) has no special organ affinity; (b) attaches itself to one organ only, in accordance with the probability created by foetal circulation, and, should other organs be also invaded simultaneously, remains silent in them."

Thus, through thick and thin, the author remains wedded to his theory of the importance of the peculiarities of the foetal circulation, and this is the recurrent theme through the many chapters dealing with cancers of particular sites. But the climax of controversy and heterodoxy is not reached until Chapters xx to xxii, where the "principle of inverse association" in relation to children's cancer is first considered. According to this principle, wherever there is an increase in cancer of one organ as a result of exposure to an exogenous carcinogen, there is a corresponding reduction in incidence in other organs. In fact, as far as man is concerned, this statement defies statistical corroboration, and in animal experiments it is patently untrue. On the penultimate page comes the amazing proposal that children should be exposed to a carcinogenic dose of ultra-violet irradiation over a small area of skin to produce a surgically removable epithelioma which will leave a life-long immunity to this and all other forms of cancer in 90 per cent of them. Undaunted by lack of evidence for this beneficial effect, the author goes on to suggest that the next generation might even benefit by passive immunity via the placenta. Those who through exposure to excessive ultra-violet radiation have sequentially developed multiple basal-cell carcinomas, or who have developed cancers of other organs after successful removal of skin tumours, will surely be dubious of the efficacy of this suggested form of immunisation.

When all is said and done this is not a book for the laboratory but for the armchair - from which indeed it was written. Some of the surprising views expressed will probably by chance alone be proved to be true. Without more satisfactory evidence, however, it is not possible at the present time to say which.

F. J. C. Roe

## Book Reviews

### Adolescence

*The Adolescent*. Illustrated. London: British Medical Association, 1961. Pp 28. 2s 6d.

This little booklet reports the interesting comments and discussions of several BMA branches. As Dr Doris Odlum states in her commentary, its conclusions are similar to those reported by various other workers.

Emphasis is laid on the need for education by example in matters of family and social life. It is agreed that many parents are untrained for this job—but who is to train them? At present teachers and doctors are equally unprepared for this task during their own training. While there is medical and general supervision of school children, little preparation for living outside school is offered, and in the majority of cases no one takes any official interest in the young worker, who is suddenly confronted with many problems which he may not want to discuss with his parents. Would raising the school leaving age help? Whether or not this is achieved, curricula do need revision.

Generally speaking, this is a community problem, and we must all help towards integrating adolescents into the community, not segregate them from us.

*Daphne Sasiemi*

### Psychotherapy

*Nerves and their Cure*, by C. Edward Barker. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1960. Pp 194 and Index, 16s.

This is a book preaching Analysis for Everyman. It is compounded of digests and quotations of analytical writings, laced with successful case histories from the author's practice as a lay psycho-

therapist and garnished with snatches of autobiography. The whole is served up in the style of the woman's weekly magazine; cottages nestle in the hills, God is the great Psychiatrist and parental anxiety about infantile masturbation is allayed with the assurance, "Kiddies love it and do a tremendous amount of it." One can hardly feel that the cause of lay psychotherapy will benefit from this publication and the subject is too serious for the vulgarisations to be amusing.

*Anthony Ryle*

### Birth Control

*Practical Birth-Control Methods*, by Abraham Stone, MD, and Norman E. Himes, PHD. English Edition, revised by Margaret C. N. Jackson, MB, BS, DOBST, RCOG, JP. Illustrations. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1960. Pp 205 and Index. 21s.

Although this book is primarily intended for the general public, it is of value also for the professional reader. It is in three parts. The main part deals in considerable detail with every method of birth control, including the most up-to-date, and is enhanced by numerous drawings. These are clear and simple. It is refreshing to find the unequivocal rejection of undesirable methods. Of particular interest are the first and third parts, which give a much wider conception of the subject. The first describes the social and legal aspects of birth control. We can read about the history of the subject throughout the ages, including the controversies in the last twenty years that have led to radical changes in the attitude of the public. In the third part related problems are discussed, such as abortion, sterilisation, infertility and family planning.

The authors are American, but the book has been adapted for British use by Dr