

Book Review

Community and Social Pediatrics. Ed. Banerjee SR. New Delhi, Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishers (P) Ltd, 1995, Pages 397, Price Rs. 250/-.

This is an interesting timely book on subjects which needed to be put together as topics of national concern relating to social and community child health problems. As mentioned in the Preface by the Editor, it is an attempt to compile inter-related aspects of Social and Community Pediatrics for medical students, social scientists and as resource book for research in different areas of Pediatrics.

The subject of social pediatrics has been engaging the attention of pediatricians and social scientists for the past two decades, but a clear consensus has still to emerge as to what comprises the social and community pediatrics for professionals, planners and administrators in India. This is reflected in the choice of subjects, which have been dealt individually rather than as sections and sub chapters.

The overall impact of the Book emerges by bringing into focus an inter-play of situational analysis of the national and international scenario. It has rightly tried to cover subjects which are mostly dealt inadequately in the text books of Pediatrics and Preventive and Social Medicine and others. The chapters on adolescence, intellectual and special sensory disabilities and emerging social problems such as drug abuse, child abuse, child labor and street children are noteworthy. The chapter on environmental pollution has been rightly included to focus attention on this major health hazard. The practical approach

is visible by inclusion of several chapters on common diseases such as Tuberculosis, ARI, and Diarrhea and specially on dermatologic problems as these remain neglected despite being common in the community.

Most of the chapters have been well written, exhaustive and provide an extensive bibliography on world literature. While this is the main strength of this book, it could also be considered as its weakness. This is largely because the Editor has tried to put together nationally identified social and health related problems of childhood in community and dealt with them as an individual problem. In an effort to provide larger perspective, the contributors have not provided analytical view of the problem and its possible solutions or strategies to deal with them. The contributors have also largely used world literature and self experience, but not made adequate attempt to compare from other Indian experiences.

It is hoped that while the maiden edition of this book could be considered as beginning of putting together the social and community childhealth related problems in India, further editions will give it more focussed attention to various problems and will also provide strategies to deal with them at the community level.

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