



BOOKS

THE FRAENKEL SAGA*

By Clara Friedman-Spits. Pp. 181. R160. SAMA Health and Medical Publishing. 1998. ISBN 0 620-21236-5.

Early in 1975 the Jewish Museum in Cape Town was offered a silver beaker inscribed to 'S Fraenkel' from one J C Stiglingh van Veerden, and dated 1809. This inspired the then curatrix of the Museum, the late Clara Friedman-Spits, to begin what was to be a 7-year quest to unravel the life history of Sigfried Fraenkel, the first Jewish medical practitioner in South Africa and one of the founding fathers of its first Hebrew congregation.

The outcome of that investigation is *The Fraenkel Saga*, which chronicles the history of the Fraenkel family from the time of Sigfried Fraenkel's forebears in mid-18th century Prussia, through successive generations to the end of the 19th century, when ownership of the beaker passed outside the immediate family.

Sigfried Fraenkel was born in Old Strelitz in Mecklenburg c. 1780 and grew up there and in Copenhagen in the home of an uncle, a surgeon in the Danish Royal Artillery. He enrolled at the Royal Academy of Surgery in Copenhagen but never completed his studies due to being called up to the Danish Navy following the Battle of Copenhagen. Subsequently he joined the merchant fleet as a surgeon but during his first voyage, trouble once again flared up in Denmark and on returning from the Dutch East Indies in 1807 his ship was detained as a war prize when it put into Simon's Bay. And there he decided to stay, most probably because he had met Johanna Catharina Henckes, the woman who was to become his wife.

Both a son and grandson also followed in Sigfried Fraenkel's footsteps in taking up medicine – his eldest son, Diederich Fraenkel, who became District Surgeon in Colesberg and later Worcester, and in turn his youngest son, Henry Fraenkel, who became District Surgeon in Clanwilliam and is also credited with inspiring C Louis Leipoldt's interest in medicine.

The Fraenkel Saga is an important contribution to the history of medicine and of Jewry in South Africa and it contains much of historical and genealogical interest to 19th century Cape Town. That much of this goes beyond the main theme of the book is testimony to the thoroughness with which the research was undertaken.

Sadly, Clara Friedman-Spits passed away while the book was in press but her son, David Friedman, took it over and enthusiastically saw it into print.

Jonathan Spencer Jones

FROM DATA TO DECISION
MAKING IN HEALTH. THE
EVOLUTION OF A HEALTH
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION
SYSTEM

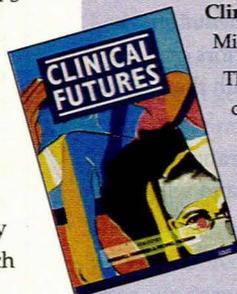
By Bruce Campbell, Sam Adjei, Arthur Heywood. Pp. 96. \$14.95. Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) 1996. ISBN 90-6832-096-3.

Bruce Campbell, Sam Adjei, and Arthur Heywood have documented how the ministry of health in Ghana developed a management information system (MIS). The MIS is paper-based and this gives the book a unique perspective. Almost the entire literature of health informatics assumes, incorrectly and misleadingly, that information systems must be computerised.

Campbell and his co-authors provide a comprehensive manual for anyone involved in planning, implementing or managing a health services MIS. Topics include project design, tools for planning and data collection, assessment of primary health care coverage and quality of care, disease surveillance, lessons learned from the Ghana experience in implementing the MIS and many examples of data-collection tools, tally sheets, and assessment tools. This is required reading for anyone involved in health service MIS in a developing country and highly recommended for health informatics students everywhere. It is a pity, however, that the book does not inform its readers about information systems which are appropriate for developing countries and which support people delivering health care.

Michael Power

BOOK MANAGER'S CHOICE



Clinical Futures, edited by Marshall Marinker and Michael Peckham. Published by BMJ Books, R279.

This eagerly awaited title is a unique book considering the future of health care from a different perspective: from the point of potential developments in the clinical sciences over the coming 50 years. Six leading figures in major specialties discuss the impact of new technology, economic, political, and technographic changes on their specialty in 10, 20, and 50 year's time.

Chapters from this book can be viewed on www.bmj.com. *Clinical Futures* is an invaluable look into the future for all health care practitioners, politicians and journalists.

* Book titles marked may be ordered directly from SAMA Health and Medical Publishing Book Department, Private Bag X1, Pinelands, 7430, tel. (021) 531-3081, fax (021) 531-4126, e-mail multimedia@samedical.co.za or jstrydom@samedical.co.za



SOUTH AFRICAN TRADITIONAL HEALERS' PRIMARY CARE HANDBOOK

Compiled and edited by Taryl Felhaber and Isaac Mayeng. Pp. xviii + 248. Illustrated. R35. Kagiso. 1997. ISBN 0-620-21523-2

This book has been received with great interest by the general public and traditional healers who can speak English. It is, however, a disappointment for those who are unable to speak English. I therefore propose that the translation of this book into Xhosa and Zulu be done as soon as possible.

This book is an attempt to integrate the traditional healers into the 'Western' scheme of things. Fifty-three plants which are currently in use are discussed. Some of them can be grown easily in local gardens and they represent a cheaper alternative to the modern medicines if the patient has to pay for medicine. (But why bother to grow or buy the medicine, if the Western equivalent is for free at the local clinic?)

Useful information on anatomy and physiology, among others, is supplied. But the most important contribution by the academics are the indications on how to recognise when things get out of hand.

The drawback of the book is that it leaves certain impressions. For example, if the suggested remedies are not achieving results, then go to a Western doctor or clinic. This may be true with a first aid worker, but in the traditional sphere there are also more capable specialists and senior herbalists and traditional practitioners. They have about 6 000 medicinal plants to choose from, as well as special preparations. The book also seems to imply that the only specialists are medical doctors.

In pathological cases there is no indication as to when they should in fact refer a patient to the traditional specialist. Serious cases e.g. possession, curses, and some mental disorders need attention from the traditional doctors or traditional specialist because they are familiar with the culture, custom and rituals of black people.

How would these cases be recognised? Dehydration is dealt with in detail so why not also the curse or spell, and what treatment should be used.

Phillip Sobantu Kubukeli

CLINICS IN DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING

By Wilfred C G Peh. Pp. xx + 255. Illustrated. US\$14.95. Miller Freeman Pty Ltd. 1998. ISBN 981-04-0133-7.

This pocket-size paperback should prove to be very popular with radiology registrars, as well as with radiologists and

clinicians with interests in the areas covered. Similar in concept to the popular 'American College of Radiology Self-Evaluation Program', a diverse selection of interesting radiology topics is presented in this publication. Thirty cases are grouped into six imaging sections: head and neck, musculoskeletal and spinal, thoracic, abdominal, paediatric and women's imaging.

Brief case studies incorporating clearly presented radiological images are used to introduce a theme in a quiz-type format. An appropriate emphasis on modern imaging is evident. Each case is broken down into case presentation, image interpretation, diagnosis, clinical course and discussion components. Pertinent clinical information, specific imaging considerations and differential diagnoses, as well as useful algorithms and tables are provided where appropriate. A list of key references follows. Each case has between four and ten pages devoted to it, making it ideal for dipping into during a few spare minutes. The clinical basis of the presentations is an excellent means of making the discussion interesting and relevant, mirroring the way in which effective learning takes place in the workplace.

Published in Singapore, the book is very reasonably priced. It is gratifying to note a South African contribution to this undertaking. Hopefully, more similar practical and economical publications will be available in the future.

S J Beningfield

BOOKS RECEIVED

The receipt of these books is acknowledged, and this listing must be regarded as sufficient return for the courtesy of the sender. Books that appear to be of particular interest will be reviewed as space permits. The *SAMJ* does not publish unsolicited reviews.

Psychiatry and Primary Health Care. Edited by Sean Exner Baumann. Pp. xiv + 525. R139. Juta. 1998. ISBN 0-7021-4207-7.

World Health Statistics Annual 1996.* Pp. xxvi + 856. SwFr150/US\$135. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-067960X.

Guidelines for Preclinical Evaluation and Clinical Trials in Osteoporosis.* Pp. vi + 68. SwFr23/US\$20.70. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-154522-4.

Guide to Drug Financing Mechanisms.* By J Dumoulin, M Kaddar and G Velasquez. Pp. vii + 55. SwFr19/US\$17.10. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-1545097.

Preparation and Use of Food-based Dietary Guidelines.* Report of a Joint FAO/WHO Consultation. WHO Technical Report Series No. 880. Pp. vi + 108. SwFr23/\$20.70. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-120880-5.

Handbook of Forensic Pathology.* By Vincent JM Di Maio and Suzanna E Dana. Pp. 249. Illustrated. US\$45. Landes Bioscience. 1998. ISBN 1-57059-495-3.

Handbook of Kidney and Pancreas Transplantation.* By Ingemar JA Davidson. Pp. 221. Illustrated. US\$45. Landes Bioscience. 1998. ISBN 1-57059-483-X.