



Your Child's Best Shot: A Parent's Guide to Vaccination

Canadian Paediatric Society's 1995-96 Infectious Diseases and Immunization Committee. 153 pp. Canadian Paediatric Society, Ottawa. 1997. \$21.95. ISBN 0-9695630-9-4

Overall rating: Very good
Strengths: Comprehensive coverage of childhood vaccines in Canada
Weaknesses: None
Audience: Parents, physicians, public health nurses and medical health officers

At a time when a small but vocal anti-immunization lobby persists in producing misinformation on the benefits of childhood immunization programs in Canada, this guide for parents fills a real need.

The CPS committee includes many of the leading experts in Canada on immunization programs. First, they describe the history of immunization. Then they review diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), measles, mumps, rubella and hepatitis B by providing the history of each disease and up-to-date information on the germ, the illness, and the vaccine and the effectiveness of it.

Parents can read the best account available on the side effects of pertussis vaccine; how vaccines were used to eradicate polio from the Western hemisphere; how invasive Hib infection has become a rarity in Canada; why a 2-dose schedule of measles vaccination is necessary; and the efforts under way to protect all children from hepatitis B.

There is a short chapter on special purpose, foreign travel and new vaccines, and an excellent questions-and-answers chapter, which includes the important question: "What conditions are *not* reasons to delay vaccination?"

Apart from parents, this book will be helpful for all physicians involved in childhood immunization and an invaluable resource for public health nurses and medical health officers.

Timothy Johnstone, MB, BS, DPH
Victoria, BC

Health and Social Organization: Towards a Health Policy for the Twenty-first Century

Edited by David Blane, Eric Brunner and Richard Wilkinson. 326 pp. Illust. Routledge, New York. 1996. \$97.95, hardcover; \$27.95, paperback. ISBN 0-415-13069-7, hardcover; ISBN 0-415-13070-0, paperback

Overall rating: Excellent
Strengths: Illustrations and figures used extensively to support data. The index, references and general layout
Weaknesses: Use of technical jargon without definition
Audience: The public, health professionals and policymakers

This collection of 16 papers marks the launch of the International Centre for Health and Society based at University College London. Twenty contributors from England, Canada and the US review the domain of population health. This volume is in direct continuity to *Why are some people healthy and others not? The determinants of health of population*, published in 1994 by the Canadian Institute of Advanced Research (CIAR). The two books have a similarity of purpose, which is enhanced by four contributors who are scientists affiliated with CIAR. The London Centre was launched in part because of strong encouragement from the Canadian group.

The purpose of these essays is to update and expand on the health determinants that are more closely related to the organization of society than to the structure of health care services. The text is well supported by more than 50 figures and as many tables; the reader is led methodically from the presentation of principles to the identification of their origin.

Part one examines the policy problem suggested by the social patterning of health and disease. A review of the implications imposed by observations drawn from the two Whitehall studies of British civil servants sets the framework of the next three parts. In these the roles of environment and economic growth, of family and the life course and of work and the characteristics of the labour market are discussed extensively. In the closing section, Fraser Mustard reviews the specific contribution of many social policies to improve human health, a timely summary in a turbulent era for many social programs.

This volume is of most interest to physicians who feel uncomfortable with some of the arguments with which population health specialists are framing health policy options for the future. This book contains all the information they need to assess the validity of these concepts. The authors meticulously explain that differences in health reflect differences in the circumstances in which people live and they argue why this has policy implications.

In contrast to health services, which are tailored after the characteristics of society, the population health is determined by a reasonably well-defined set of factors that transcend the singularity of each society. Hence the interest of the material found in this book; nowhere else will physicians find more readily all they need