



The Essential Guide to OCD:

Help for Families and Friends
Helen Poskitt

- Lion Books, 2013, £8.99 Pb 176pp, ISBN 9780745955803
- Reviewed by **Chris Williams**, Professor of Psychosocial Psychiatry, University of Glasgow

The author has gone to a lot of effort letting the sufferer – and their families and friends – be listened to. The book is structured around extensive quotes from OCD sufferers so that all the main presentations of OCD – ruminations, checking, cleaning etc are well-covered. This approach works well so the reader gets a very full understanding of what life with OCD is like.

The same approach is attempted with practitioners, but less successfully as few responded to the author's request for interview. The result is that some content does not always reflect current treatment guidelines.

Whilst the book is strong on understanding OCD, it falls short on describing interventions in a way that could enable change. It is not a self-help book and aims to inform rather than help the reader change or self-manage their symptoms. Likewise, interventions are described but not prioritised – so similar levels of information are provided for some non-evidence based treatments and rarely used approaches (eg psychosurgery) perhaps leading to confusion in readers' minds.

In summary – this book will help readers understand OCD, but is weaker in helping explain what can be done to help.



Thank You with a smile:

A personal battle with mouth cancer
Christine Dunningham

- Trafford Publishing, 2008, £7.99 Pb 104 pp, ISBN 9781425170806
- Reviewed by **Andrew Brown**, retired Maxillofacial/Head & Neck Surgeon

Mouth cancer is an under-recognised form of malignancy by many doctors. Patients, when given the diagnosis, may even express surprise that it exists. However, there is evidence that it is on the increase in the UK and this personal memoir confirms that it is not confined to the traditional heavy smoker and heavy drinker.

This short account of combined complex surgery and radiotherapy is essentially an expanded personal diary. Key reminders it contains for professionals are the importance of a strong support network in coping with devastating illness, the role of 'lesser' members of the multi-disciplinary team in coming alongside at critical moments,

the frightening environment of the intensive care unit if communication is difficult, the near bereavement experience of losing taken for granted normal oral function, and the deleterious long term effects of radiotherapy on the oral cavity.

Unfortunately the personal recounting of the day to day medical events, plus the naming of many friends and family members, may make this book of limited value to general readers. However, the author's positive approach, undergirded by her personal faith in Christ, shines through; as do the caring support of her husband and the prayerful encouragement of her church fellowship. Other patients are much less fortunate in this regard.



Songs in the night

Adele Pilkington

- Onwards and Upwards, 2013, £9.99 Pb 84pp, ISBN 9781907509711
- Reviewed by **John Caroe**, retired General Practitioner

This is a collection of 60 short poems covering a range of everyday spiritual ideas and situations. These poems have evidently been written by Adele Pilkington as a personal expression of her wonder, gratitude and love for her Lord. It takes great courage to share such things.

Poetry springs from the heart, and seeks to speak to the hearts of others. It does not generally pretend to arise primarily from intellectual understanding, yet in communicating its message it may submit to the cerebral discipline of rhyme, meter and language to different degrees. Readers will vary in their

particular taste for the range of styles thus available to a writer.

Those who are setting out on their exploration of poetry and the faith may well respond to Adele's clear adherence to the basic tenets of poetry that we all learn. Those who seek to fly higher in the Spirit into the wonders of the spiritual realm with Jesus may find here that the worldly rulebook detracts attention from the journey into those mysteries.

Well done to Adele (and to CMF) for the courage to explore this vital mode of communication and communion that when anointed can speak deeper than many an essay in prose.



Primary Healthcare in East Africa

For how long shall countries run after diseases?
Nick Wooding, Teddy Nagaddya & Florence Nakaggwa

- Fountain Publishers Kampala, 2012, £10.00 Pb 322pp, ISBN 9789970251483 (To purchase email nickwooding@doctors.net.uk)
- Reviewed by **Emma Pedlar**, medical student in Manchester

The 1978 Alma Ata Declaration saw primary healthcare (PHC) as the key to solving the world's healthcare problems. CMF member Nick Wooding and African colleagues ask, 'In the intervening 30 years has health for all been achieved?'

Their focus is largely on Uganda with examples from other East African countries, referring to the Millennium Development Goals as a platform for evaluation.

The authors include a detailed overview of the fundamental principles of PHC in Uganda and other East African countries. Selective and comprehensive PHC are compared, and case studies demonstrate effective strategies. The book emphasises community participation, with

examples of successful partnership and problem solving. It provides methods of healthcare system evaluation which can be used in other contexts.

This is an excellent reference source for anyone interested in PHC in East Africa, whether academically or practically. I found it particularly useful in studying for a Masters in Public Health even though my country of interest is Malawi. There are many useful principles which are transferable.

It is particularly helpful to have a resource which is supportive of the role of faith-based organisations in providing for people's needs. It concludes that although providing Uganda with access to basic PHC is a challenge, it is worth it, so to keep pushing on!



My Right Hand in the Father's: *Knowing God's comfort and strength through breast cancer*

Helen E Jones

- Verite CM Ltd, 2012, £7.99 Pb 160pp, ISBN 9781907636530
- Reviewed by **Helen Sweetland**, Consultant Breast Surgeon in Cardiff

This is Helen's personal story of her diagnosis and treatment for breast cancer, including surgery and chemotherapy. It is an honest reflection of how she and her family (including two young sons), dealt with that journey.

The account of the physical and emotional effects of treatment is permeated by her testimony of how her Christian faith was challenged by events yet grew stronger as the months progressed. She was supported by Christian friends and relatives, who are the focus of many of the situations described, and there are many humorous anecdotes.

Each chapter is short but with plenty of food for thought.

Alongside the facts there are inspiring Bible verses, hymns, poems and prayers that have helped Helen through this challenging time. Each chapter could be used as a focus for personal meditation on God's love and care.

This book would be helpful to someone dealing with breast cancer treatment and friends or relatives, as it provides useful insights into how patients, carers and friends can react to each other during treatment. It gives guidance on simple practical ways of providing care and support for someone in that situation. A helpful chapter on life after treatment provides useful tips on how to deal with life physically and spiritually.



So many Everests: *From Cerebral Palsy to Casualty Consultant*

Diana and Victoria Webster

- Lion Books, 2012, £8.05 240pp Pb ISBN 9780745955957
- Reviewed by **Jean Maxwell**, retired consultant in Palliative Medicine

This is the story of Spratty, real name Victoria, who was born in 1965 with cerebral palsy and a generous helping of determination. The book is set mostly in Finland and told first by her mother Diana, and then by Victoria herself.

Although eager to keep reading, I felt confused by a health system that I could not identify with, and frustrated for the family by the obstacles they faced. The unexpected death of her father, the problems at school, her struggles to improve a speech impairment and the prejudice she faced by others painted a picture I hope would not be seen today – but maybe

it would, and maybe that is the reason to read this book.

As I read the determined accounts of being accepted for medical training, I remained confused that her suitability then continued to be questioned. I found the decision making through her training a little tedious, but felt endless admiration for her achievements, and particularly how she introduces herself to patients. 'Hello, I'm Victoria Webster. I'm your doctor. I have a speech handicap, but I hope it doesn't bother you'. And it didn't seem to, which is as it should be. She finally reached the top of the mountain – and is the first Casualty Consultant in Scandinavia.



Soul Pain: *Priests reflect on personal experiences of serious and terminal illness*

Jennifer Tann (ed)

- Canterbury Press, 2013, £16.99 Pb 244pp, ISBN 9781848252776
- Reviewed by **Claire Stark Toller**, Locum Consultant in Palliative Medicine

This collection of essays is written by Anglican ministers who have experienced serious or terminal illness. The opening chapter explores the meaning of 'healing' and 'wholeness', examining biblical accounts of healing and Jesus' experience in the Garden of Gethsemane, and reviewing these concepts in ancient and current Christian writings.

Topics covered include living with stroke, experiencing multiple miscarriages and living with leukaemia. One recounts a recovery from acute heart failure described by his cardiologists as a miracle. The final chapter encourages the sufferer to lament, and offer this as worship to God.

Many of these reflections could

be shared by any Christian but several contributors highlight the impact it has had on their ministry. One reflects on the suffering minister as an 'icon of Christ' revealing the sufferings of Jesus. Others struggle to know how to manifest their suffering when some parishioners expect them to bear their illness with unswerving courage. One notes how his experiences help him empathise with sick parishioners.

This book would be helpful to anyone, and to Christian ministers in particular, wishing to explore suffering in the life of the Christian. It could also provide insights for doctors facing their own illness and considering its impact on their therapeutic relationship with patients.



Serving without sinking: *How to serve Christ and keep your joy*

John Hindley

- Good Book Company, 2013, £6.79 128pp, ISBN 9781908762351
- Reviewed by **Emma Pedlar**, medical student in Manchester

Have you ever thought 'well now I can tick that bit of service off the list'? Or felt overwhelmed by all the commitments you've signed up to? If like me the answer is yes, then here is a book is for you!

Serving without sinking begins by examining our attitudes towards serving, and shows how we can get our perspective all wrong. Hindley then realigns our thinking: the Bible says Jesus came to serve us. By Jesus' death we are given a new identity; we are friends, children and his bride. We don't grumble about helping our friends; a child should delight in pleasing her parents; we love to make our

loved ones happy.

We should think the same way about serving God. Serving is a privilege, and our righteous acts make up the wedding dress of the bride. Hindley concludes by noting that we are spoken of as God's servants, but this must be seen in light of the other aspects of our identity in Christ. When we recognise that God is good, loving and gracious, and that Jesus sustains us by his Spirit, prays for us and is with us as we serve, then we can delight in having such a master. Serving is Jesus' gift to us, and this short, readable book shows us how joyful it can be.