

their children to be reared in".

This is a disturbing but very important book.

*Cliff Picton,  
Australian Council of the Ageing*

## **CHILD ABUSE**

**By Kempe, R.S. & Kempe, C.H.,  
157 p.p. Fontana Open Books,  
London, 1978. R.R.P. \$4.25**

In this book Henry C. Kempe, Professor of Paediatrics collaborates with Ruth Kempe, Associate Professor of Paediatrics and Professor of Psychiatry at the medical centre, University of Colorado, to present the collective knowledge and experience obtained from many years of work with 'abusive' families. Henry Kempe was largely responsible for the renewed professional and community concern with child abuse which has occurred since the early sixties. Henry Kempe's interest in the incidence of non-accidental injury in children prompted the American Academy of Paediatrics to conduct a symposium on the problem in 1961.

The publication of an article entitled "The Battered Child Syndrome", by Kempe and a group of radiologists and paediatric and psychiatrist specialists in the prestigious journal of the American Medical Association, further promoted professional interest in the problem. In 1962 Kempe presented a paper to a group of lawyers, doctors and social workers at a conference on child abuse which was called by the United States Children's Bureau. Since that time Kempe has appeared at numerous symposiums on child abuse all over the world and has published material concerning his research into child abuse.

This particular publication presents some material which has appeared in a more technical form in earlier publications edited by Henry Kempe. The book is divided into two main parts. Part 1 — "The Nature of Child Abuse" contains chapters dealing with definitions of child abuse, the characteristics of abusers, the characteristics of abused children and their behaviour, and the nature of sexual abuse and incest. Part 11 — "Dealing with Child Abuse", describes the authors' research findings concerning pre-disposing factors in parents and treatment strategies in working with 'abusive' parents and 'abused' children. The authors conclude with a plea for a

more community-based approach to the problem and a greater concern for children's rights.

Although this book will be a valuable general resource book for welfare workers and agencies, the more discerning reader will find it less satisfactory. One feature which I personally found limiting was the Kempe's tendency to make generalizations of the basis of their own research, without adequately substantiating their findings. An example of this occurs in Chapter Five, where the Kemples describe their research into pre-disposing factors in parents but fail to provide enough information about the content of their questionnaires for the reader to evaluate the validity or general applicability of their findings. Although, this book is aimed primarily at the generalist rather than the specialist, it would have been useful if the reader could have been given access to more details concerning this research. For example, this could have been done either in appendix form, or by references to more detailed research reports concerning the project.

A further limitation is the Kemples' presentation of child abuse only in terms of a medical model. Within the medical model, the abusive parent of caretaker is seen to be the principal cause of child abuse, the assumption being, that abusive caretakers are abnormal or ill. Although this is a legitimate stance to take, the reader who is unaware of the recent contributions to the academic and professional literature by adherents of the ecological and sociological perspectives, could easily gain the impression from the Kemples' writing that the medical approach is the only way of perceiving the problem. This belies the work of writers such as Carter, Gil, Gelles and Garbarino who have described the significance of structural and cultural factors as determinants of child abuse.

Despite these limitations, the book has many commendable features. One virtue is its practicality, in that specific guidelines are provided for professionals involved in treatment work. These treatment strategies are at all times presented within the context of the needs of all family members including the siblings of abused children. The Kemples also make some valuable suggestions for reducing the staff turn-over of social workers involved in child protection work. For instance, they suggest that

child protective workers should be freed from their case-work duties for two to three weeks every three months to evaluate their work and to improve their liaison with schools. This suggestion is worthy of serious consideration by the social work profession and employing authorities. Finally, for the reader who is interested in reading more widely on the subject there is a useful annotated bibliography at the back of the book.

This book is likely to be read and assimilated by a wide audience. As has been the case with other publications emanating from the work carried out at the University of Colorado, it should contribute to an increased awareness and community action for children vulnerable to abuse. In the professional literature and discourse on child abuse, Henry Kempe and his colleagues at the University of Colorado stand out in their commitment to their work and their efforts to communicate their research findings. For this they can only be commended!

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## **A Planning Guide for Voluntary Human Service Delivery Agencies**

**by S.M. Drezner and W.B.  
McCurdy Family Service  
Association of America, New  
York, 1979.**

What is the real task of a manager? Ask this of people and the responses will be illuminating — if only because they will point to the fact that there is probably no other secular topic in this complex industrial work of ours which arouses more babble as well as learned discussion than that of "Management".

The teaching of "Management" is a big business in itself. Consultants and a multitude of training courses are available everywhere (for a price) and Institutes of Management are also there to sustain the harassed and anxiety-ridden executive. In print and by word every aspect of the manager's role is analysed and dissected, with the industrial psychologists and sociologists contributing their bit by methodically scrutinising the personalities of "successful" managers and the