May 1976

Books Received

Catholic Physicians' Guild

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Recommended Citation
Catholic Physicians' Guild (1976) "Books Received," The Linacre Quarterly: Vol. 43: No. 2, Article 17.
Available at: http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol43/iss2/17
the physician who prescribes and
the patient who ingests, and a
crystal example of how to make
technology readable.

George Vlasak deals handily
with the complexity of suicidal
behavior and dares the taboo
truth of the 'social worthiness
scale,' indicated by the loudness
and length of the ambulance siren
and attitudes of Emergency
Room staff. Bodies of suicides
(unless famous), sharing the bot-
tom of the scale with skid-row
alcoholics, are subject to experi-
mental indignities by doctors, and
refusal of handling by nurses.

Seymour Perlin's contribution
on Psychiatry explains reasons
for suicide (the helpless rage)
engendered by inability to change
the world, or adapt oneself, the
revenge motif, the despair of guilt
and failure), and shows how the
isolation common to all these
makes help-seeking less likely.

Dr. Sainsbury describes vary-
ing modes of such help, and how
all suicide prevention agencies,
lay and professional, could be in-
tegrated to save lives.

Mary Monk, on statistics,
points out the difficulties of evalu-
ating such suicide prevention
services, since one cannot justify
withholding the services from a
selected or random group.

All in all, this handbook, from
a group of concerned and in-
formed people, is a welcome addi-
tion to the literature of suicide.

Monica Dickens
Director, The Samaritans

REVIEWERS

Recent additions to LQ's staff of book reviewers include the following:

Dickens, Monica, British novelist and journalist; Director, The Samaritans,
International Suicide Prevention Organization.

Doherty, Dennis J., Ph.D., Assoc. Prof. of Theology, Marquette University.

Jefferson, Mildred F., M.D., President, National Right-to-Life Committee.

McGregor, James E., Asst. Prof. of Philosophy, Boston State College.

Southgate, M. Therese, M.D., Deputy Editor, The Journal of the American
Medical Assoc.

Books Received

Abortion in Perspective: The Rose
Place or the Fiery Dragon? (with
18 slides and audiocassette). Dr.
Donald DeMarch. Hiltz & Hayes
Pub., Cincinnati. 1974, XIV + 194
p., $3.95

America's Worst Drug Problem: Alcohol. Richard L. Reilly, D.O.
Liguori Pub., Liguori, Mo. 1974, 128
p., $1.75

Bibliography of Bioethics, Vol. 1. Le-
Roy Walters, Ph.D., editor. Gale
Research Co., Detroit. 1975, XXIII +
225 p., $24.00

Biomedical Ethics: Morality for the
1974, XVIII + 134 p., $5.95

Biomedical Experimentation on Pris-
oners: Review of Practices and
Problems and Proposal of a New
Regulatory Approach. Albert R.
Jonsen, et al. School of Medicine,
Univ. of Calif. 1975, 43 p., no price
given.

Complaints and Disorders: The Sex-
ual Politics of Sickness. Barbara
Ehrenreich & Deirdre English. The

The Conflict of Interest Between Physician as Therapist and as Experimenter. Louis Lasagna, M.D. Society for Health and Human Values, Philadelphia. 1975, 26 p., no price given.

Death and Beyond. Andrew Greeley. The Thomas More Assoc., Chicago. 1976, 144 p., $7.95


Responsible Stewardship of Human Life: Inquiries into Medical Ethics II. Rev. Donald G. McCarthy, Ph.D., editor. The Catholic Hospital Assoc., St. Louis, Mo. 1976, VI + 138 p., no price given.

Sex Education for the Handicapped. (Series of pamphlets) Human Sciences Press, N. Y. Various publication dates.

Material appearing below is thought to be of particular interest to Linacre Quarterly readers because of its moral, religious, or philosophic content. The medical literature constitutes the primary but not the sole source of such material. In general, abstracts are intended to reflect the substance of the original article. Contributions and comments from readers are invited. (E. G. Laforet, M.D., 2000 Washington St., Newton Lower Falls, MA. 02162.)


The informed consent given by patients or research subjects is rarely valid. Freedom to choose may be restricted by many extraneous elements. In the area of clinical research a conflict of interest might be avoided if the physician caring for a patient did not simultaneously wear the hat of clinical investigator. This separation of interests has precedent in the matter of the living kidney donor.


The notion of what is natural and unnatural is difficult to apply. With the emphasis on application to human beings and in the medical context of the dichotomy between disease and health, the basic Aristotelian framework is examined. Such a study of the natural and of deviations therefrom may prove useful in the clarification of disease.


In Britain there has been much emphasis by health-care planners on the use of computers and data banks, with little concern for the loss of privacy that this might entail. Although "the public in general has been remarkably submissive," occasional voices have been raised about the potential threats of modern technology to the individual. In the past, possibly damaging information concerning patients has been under the control of the individual physician. Control is lost when files are computerized. Although bureaucrats have maintained that the computer will not be misused in a dem-