

Book Reviews

statements of early reformers are not analysed on their own terms, and their awareness of social conditions is played down. The possibility that even the most disinterestedly benevolent reformer may have had to emphasize continuing discipline in order to give his views any credibility is not considered.

There is an over-emphasis on continuity, making the story repetitious and ignoring modifications over time, e.g. in the terms considered acceptable to describe the prison population in the pages of the medical journals. The currently renewed topicality of the subject would have afforded plenty of up-to-date references from the *BMJ* and the *Lancet*, perusal of which would also have made it difficult to ignore the matter of AIDS/HIV infection in prisons, surprisingly not mentioned in the book. Valuable, however, is his emphasis on resistance and challenges to medical power in parallel with its consolidation, and the awareness throughout of a wider social context outside the walls. His sources include polemical pamphlets and the medical press as well as official records.

Despite the acknowledged debt to Foucault, Sim differs from him, for example in the emphasis accorded to gender relations and the power hierarchy, and the intense "professional gaze" focused on women. The longest chapter is devoted to women in prison, historically and up to date. He also pays special attention to the experiences of ethnic minorities, in relation to the many and varied forms of medically sanctioned oppression, and rejection of its rationale. He is well aware of the need to criticize medical discourse and question the methods and motives of "research".

Even if Sim's book is neither comprehensive nor definitive, nor historiographically impeccable, it has the virtue of stimulating interest and suggesting further lines of possible research, as well as making a worthwhile contribution to an important and under-researched topic.

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DOROTHY PORTER and ROY PORTER, *Patient's progress: doctors and doctoring in eighteenth-century England*, Oxford, Polity Press, 1989, 8vo, pp. viii, 305, £29.50.

The consumer's view of any service is far harder to discover and usually less flattering than an occupation's perception of itself, while the notion that the customer's place is in the wrong would have received short shrift in Georgian England. These problems are inseparable, even today, in trying to understand how patients and practitioners relate to each other. Patients, however, differ from clients and customers and in the eighteenth century their social standing, *vis-à-vis* the practitioner's, was crucial. The patients who were actually superior to their medical attendants were a minority, but this position could be reversed when the sick gentleman was dependent on and grateful to his physician or surgeon.

Dorothy and Roy Porter have shown that "sturdy self-help" was the first step when someone became ill, followed, often reluctantly, by medical attention, if only for reassurance. Doctors were denigrated for their incompetence and self-importance, but above all for their fees, which certainly rose in an inflationary, expansionist century. Yet, as the authors make clear, more people increasingly used medical services, doctors became more available and visible, while only Londoners' bills were truly exorbitant. Simple envy of the successful practitioner's worldly trappings (house, carriage, dress) by those who paid his fees, cannot be discounted in these complaints.

Almost certainly the fastest-growing profession in the eighteenth century, as the authors emphasize, the "medical market place was eclectic and open, being determined chiefly by the ability to pay", just like any other service or commodity. The fringe practitioners added incalculably to the overall picture. Choice was an important part of the patient-practitioner relationship, with second and even third opinions sought by the disgruntled or incurable. The profession survived both satire and incompetence as the population grew more and more "doctor-dependent".

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Dorothy and Roy Porter's book splendidly fulfills their intention to make it patient-orientated and they trawl an impressive range of contemporary sources to do so. They show that personal confidence in a medical practitioner invariably weighed heavily and provide a corrective chapter, 'The Doctor's Point of View', lest readers imagine practitioners supinely accepted criticism and slights, distracted though they were by professional rivalry with the apothecaries as well as the myriad self-helpers and quacks. In unbureaucratic eighteenth-century England there was certainly no institutionalized, womb-to-tomb approach to medicine, an attitude that some modern scholars find hard to grasp. The crucial problem for the medical historian remains one of sources, both typicality and reliability. It is impossible to assess in Georgian England how far diarists and correspondents represented patients. Clearly gender- and class-specific, such records' survival rate remains a basic worry, for they may have been particularly susceptible to destruction by descendants if the contents were thought unacceptable in some way. In addition, the substantial numbers of eighteenth-century patients treated free at hospitals, dispensaries or by the parish surgeon remain hidden from historians; only those discharging themselves from hospitals each year indicate any other response than dutiful gratitude. Not all patients expressed their worst health fears, even to their diaries, family or friends, but they were likelier to record medical fees, prescriptions, regimen, and prognosis. That medicine became increasingly authoritarian by the mid-nineteenth century is not in doubt, but the authors rightly stress that in Georgian England it was not sexual, but class politics which motivated female patients.

Predictably, practitioners' own surviving writings concentrate on patient data (medications prescribed, visits made, fees charged), only rarely noting the patient's personality, responses and the like. Some patients, especially the opulent, must often have been very trying and medical comments on this category are, for obvious reasons, scarce. Few can equal the referral note to another practitioner about a tiresome patient from Dr Henry Jephson of Leamington Spa, "I send you a fat old goose: when you have well plucked her, send her back to me!"

The authors state and fulfill their intentions; their survey, as well as being wide-ranging, is highly readable and skillfully presented, even suggesting research that remains to be tackled (contemporary female practitioners). In the last decade medical history has gained a new emphasis and importance by concentrating on patients, instead of the earlier "great-name" approach, and *Patient's progress* is a good example of this trend.

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SAUL JARCHO (transl. and ed.), *Clinical consultations and letters by Ippolito Francesco Albertini, Francesco Torti and other physicians: University of Bologna MS 2089-1*, Boston, Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, 1989, 8vo, pp. lxxix, 356, illus., \$24.95, dist. Watson Publishing International.

These clinical consultations span the first three decades of the eighteenth century, providing us with a glimpse of what physicians believed and prescribed during that period. After bringing the *Clinical consultations of Giambattista Morgagni* (1984) to our attention, Jarcho now provides us with an annotated translation of the activities of several of Morgagni's central Italian contemporaries. Ippolito Francesco Albertini (1662-1738), lecturer at the University of Bologna and gifted clinician, published his *Animadversiones* on dyspnoea and structural impairment of the heart in 1731. Francesco Torti (1658-1741), an accomplished consultant, went on to practice in Modena after obtaining his doctoral degree at Bologna, and is known for his 1712 work on fever, the *Therapeutice specialis*. Amongst the other contributors are Sebastiano Trombelli, a lecturer who was famed for his dissections, and Vincenzo Pigozzi, who practised medicine in Crevalcore, outside Bologna, and was married to Albertini's sister Giulia.

The manuscript consultation reports contained in this volume were found in 1830 at the home of the Pigozzi family, and are now held at the Bologna University Library. It is a fascinating source, demonstrating the preoccupations of the age as well as the responses of physicians. Hence the prevalence of fever, in all its forms. If the detail in the consultations is