

Edmund Pellegrino, it cannot be ignored.

DR S G POTTS
*Harkness Fellow, Visiting Scholar,
 Kennedy Institute of Ethics,
 Georgetown University, Washington DC,
 USA*

Ethics in Nursing: the Caring Relationship

Verena Tschudin, 151 pages, London, £5.95, Heinemann Nursing, 1986

A discussion of 'ethics relevant to nursing' or 'nursing ethics' should perhaps define the realms of nursing and ethics and so explain why a text on the subject is necessary. Tschudin relates the rise of nursing ethics to the new awareness of professional responsibilities among nurses. Individualised care and the nursing process has, she claims, made nurses much more involved with the feelings and rights of the patients they care for. They therefore require more knowledge and understanding of both the proper processes of decision-making and of ethical dilemmas which have to be tolerated. This book is proposing to help by providing information and guidance.

Perhaps what is seen as most special to nursing by Tschudin is the caring nature of the work. The first chapter of the book is occupied by an explanation of a caring relationship. In one sense this is slightly puzzling as the reader searches for what is pertinent to ethical matters. However, subsequent chapters become more relevant and applied to the work of nurses with patients. After another abstract section on ethical theories the writer includes complete copies of the codes of conduct for nurses issued by the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing and the Royal College of Nursing, which should be useful to students or those who are unprofessional enough not to have studied them previously!

It is really the last section of the book in which three chapters discuss ethical decisions, issues and dilemmas, that may seem most familiar to nurses of any grade. Useful strategies for studying issues and making decisions are outlined and based on the classic ethical principles of 'value of life', 'goodness or rightness', 'justice or fairness', 'truth telling or honesty' and 'individual freedom'.

This subject of ethics in nursing may

be seen as so important for practitioners, as indeed the author believes, that it is difficult for a tiny book to do it justice, even as an introduction. Although Verena Tschudin has tried to integrate nursing and ethical issues, some sections seem slightly simplistic while others are rather sophisticated. For instance the contrast between the rather pseudo-philosophical section on caring (at 'O' level standard) with the clear, academic, well-referenced style of subsequent sections on theories and values is startling. However, this is not a unique problem for nursing authors in seeking for an appropriate level and a reasonable price. Just as nursing is changing to expect a more scientific and rational basis for care so readers should deserve that level of material. Tschudin demonstrates how this can be done usefully for students and others in some later chapters.

Students could benefit from this as an introduction to stimulate thought and interest in this area but of course the subject certainly deserves more advanced work.

JENIFER WILSON-BARNETT
*Professor in Nursing Studies
 King's College,
 London*

Ethical Issues in Psychosurgery

John Kleinig, 152 pages, London £5.95 soft cover, £15.00 hard cover, George Allen & Unwin, 1985.

This is a balanced and thoughtful book. It is one of a series of 'Studies in applied philosophy', under the editorship of Brenda Cohen and Anthony O'Hear. The author of this particular volume is a senior lecturer in philosophy at Macquarie University in the USA.

The book attempts to cover a wide range of topics within its brief length, and so the space devoted to each is limited. A summary of the historical development of psychosurgical techniques is followed by a resumé of problems associated with psychiatric classification and diagnosis, and a summary of the particular conditions for which psychosurgery has been used as a form of treatment. A particularly good chapter focusing on the issue of consent considers the justifications for requiring consent, its validity, and the possible coercive influences on patients in hospital. There is a sensitive discussion about the inequality of power and influence between doctors

and institutionalised patients, and the author argues that the inequality of bargaining position does not necessarily demonstrate the patient's decisions are not voluntary, but that it is a factor which detracts from the ideal of voluntariness, and needs to be carefully considered.

The particular features of psychosurgery which have caused concern are discussed, and the problems of establishing proper criteria of effectiveness are well summarised. Kleinig dissects out four understandings of therapeutic success, namely the achievement of symptom removal, manageability of behaviour, attainment in particular psychological tests, and the notion of restoration. The limitations of each criterion are noted, and the literature evaluating psychosurgery is critically reviewed.

A final chapter on the 'social dimensions' of psychosurgery emphasises the general need for independent systems of checks and balances to ensure that the individual transactions of doctors and patients operate within a socially acceptable framework. Independent review panels are suggested as one means of providing this. The requirement of an independent second opinion, introduced in the 1983 Mental Health Act, might be a further example. Kleinig concludes that such supervision '... need not be seen as the undermining of trust, as some fear, but rather as an attempt to provide an environment in which trust may flourish without abuse and disappointment'.

Kleinig carefully exposes many of the logical errors and dubious claims which have surrounded the subject, and he recognises that psychosurgical procedures have benefited a number of patients. He rightly sees that a patient's individual consent is not a sufficient safeguard against possible misuse of potentially hazardous procedures. As an outsider to the psychiatric world he asks: 'What does it betray about our conception of others if we are willing to subject them to serious risks merely because they are willing to give consent'. His book is a useful contribution to the debate.

ADRIAN GROUNDS
*Lecturer in Forensic Psychiatry
 Institute of Psychiatry, London*