

epistemology, even so far as to mention Popperian refutability, but the chapter is well written, and forms a useful basis for the rest of the book.

The problems of subjectivity in science are extended in chapters four to nine, in discussions of fraud, gullibility and the resistance of scientists to scientific discovery. These are now favourite subjects in the public discussion of science, and some of the thorny issues that result in tension between scientists and science writers are well explored by Nelkin in chapter 33, 'The high cost of hype'.

Many of the authors writing in this book deny that there are, or should be, rules that govern the behaviour of scientists, but consider that there should be suggestions for the guidance of workers. In a short chapter on this subject (chapter 23), the Harvard University Faculty of Medicine has summarized the guidelines that it provides for its own research workers. This is an excellent, succinct summary, which has obviously been written by practising scientists, and which leaves ample room for manoeuvre by the very different characters that turn up in scientific research. The following chapter, which is an equivalent set of guidelines from the National Institutes of Health, is more prolix and polysyllabic, and contains more grand generalizations than simple practical guidance. Chapter ten reproduces a report from the National Academy of Sciences in the USA, 'Responsible Science: Ensuring the Integrity of the Research Process'. This, like the Harvard Medical School guidelines, is clearly written, succinct and pragmatic, and again has the air of being written by people who actually do science and who are trying to improve it. They divide unacceptable behaviour in science into three categories: 1. scientific misconduct; 2. questionable research practices, which do not directly damage the fabric of science but which weaken it in various ways, for example, the use of inappropriate statistical tests that enhance the significance of data, and 3. misconduct, such as harassment of colleagues, that is not related to research.

The panel that wrote this report warns that it is risky to design policies to deal with all possible instances of inappropriate behaviour, because the circumstances differ so widely between cases.

Caplan provides a highly readable account (chapter 21) of issues underlying the ethics of animal experiments, in which he refutes Singer's utilitarian view of animal sentience, and argues that purposiveness is a better criterion than sentience for assessing the moral worth of an entity. He then argues rather briefly against moral absolutes, observing that human interests are bound to conflict with those of other organisms. I would like to have seen a more explicit discussion of how, both philosophically and politically, 'rights' are assigned to entities as a result of their sentient and purposive powers. Surely rights are assigned by humans: they are not inherent and do not have absolute and independent existence.

Huth has a useful piece on bad publishing practice in scientific research (chapter 14), in which he condemns the division of results into least publishable units (LPU), otherwise known as salami science. Perhaps a few statements like those made by Huth should accompany the instructions to authors in all scientific journals. Lomasky (chapter 29) exposes the speciousness of the argument that an academic should be motivated only by the search for knowledge, while others can pursue their work for profit. As he points out, if a barber cuts hair for profit, why should a scientist not gain knowledge for profit? There need be nothing immoral about this; indeed, provided that results are openly shared, the knowledge gained from science rapidly becomes a public resource – unlike hair.

Considering that it must have been written by a committee, chapter 30, 'Patenting life', provides a surprisingly readable summary of the most important questions raised by the patenting of artificially altered organisms, such as bacteria, transgenic mice, etc. Murray (chapter 35) introduces some of the ethical questions in human genome research but, considering the rapidly growing importance of this problem, particularly in the public mind, it would perhaps have been appropriate to include more chapters on this subject.

Each section of the book ends with some questions for discussion and references for further reading. As the book is presented, I only found one irritating omission: there are no details about the authors – where they work and what they do. This would have been very interesting, since they range from philosophers to laboratory workers.

Because of the breadth of the ethical questions considered in this book,

it will obviously be an extremely useful source book on courses in scientific ethics, particularly in the biological sciences. For the same reason, and because each chapter is quite short, the book also makes a highly useful source for busy scientists to dip into – a good source for coffee-time moral philosophers.

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## **The harm we do: a Catholic doctor confronts Church, moral and medical teaching**

Joyce Poole, Mystic, Connecticut,  
Twenty-Third Publications, 1993,  
168 pages, \$12.95

Dr Poole is a Roman Catholic who has spent a working life in medical practice in the National Health Service (NHS), much of it as a general practitioner. Her book is an account of the conflicts and difficulties faced by a doctor with respect for the teachings of the Church when striving to find a humane and helpful response to a patient in distress, either physical or mental. Throughout, she illustrates her discussion with case histories from her own experience, and these strongly reinforce her main argument, which is that dogmatic general principles always need to be applied sensitively in response to individual need.

In making the point that in some instances the most genuinely compassionate help a doctor can offer is an abortion or sterilization – both forbidden by the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church – she is not embracing a purely situational, relativist ethic. Her book can be read as reflections on the problems faced by a doctor and her patients living within a credal moral framework that in principle excludes certain courses of action from the outset. The confrontation of the title is chiefly with the current attitude of the Roman magisterium to sexual matters, especially its obsession with contraception. Most of her case histories are about sexual and reproductive problems – contraception (including sterilization), abortion, infertility and HIV infection. She leaves the reader in no doubt that she regards the

teaching embodied in *Humanae Vitae* and subsequent encyclicals as a source of psychological harm that may occasionally have physical consequences, for example where a patient is reluctant to seek advice and treatment until it is too late for effective therapy. She recognises that the ban on the Pill is widely ignored by Catholics, and that Catholic women seeking an abortion will go into the back streets or travel abroad to obtain one if there is no alternative, but she does not underrate the damage to individuals and families caused by a persisting sense of guilt.

If *The Harm We Do* was merely an attack on a dogmatic theological position that the author considers doubtfully tenable it would be of limited interest outside the rather narrow circles of moral theologians and interpreters of the teaching of the central hierarchy of the Roman Church. It is, however, much more than this, in two respects. First, Dr Poole makes plain the strength of her own Christian belief, grounded in the theology of the Second Vatican Council, which laid great emphasis on the duty of all believers to bring their knowledge and experience to bear on the search for right and true judgments of conscience. Her critique does not spring from anger, but from a concern that what the Roman Church has to say on spiritual matters of central importance is becoming increasingly obscured by inappropriate moral pronouncements on non-essential issues of sexual and medical ethics that endanger its credibility and marginalize many loyal and committed Catholics.

Secondly, and more generally, her book is an autobiographical account of a life spent in the practice of medicine that is a model for all young doctors and other health care professionals. At a time when counselling is talked about as if it was something quite new in medicine, in the context of genetic screening for instance, it is refreshing to be reminded that listening to patients and exploring therapeutic options with them is central to good clinical practice, and not an add-on extra. Dr Poole's warm and straightforward way of writing is enjoyable to read, and her book deserves wide commendation in medical schools.

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## Challenges in medical care

Edited by Andrew Grubb,  
Chichester, John Wiley and Sons,  
1992, 196 pages, £25.00 hc

This latest offering from the Centre of Medical Law and Ethics at King's College, London, makes fascinating reading. The scope of the collection is wide, drawing in contributions from philosophers, lawyers, sociologists, archbishops, and even doctors. This is a healthy sign; medical ethics, perhaps uniquely among the branches of applied philosophy, is a broad church, in which there is room for the perspectives of many disciplines.

It is invidious, but inevitable, to select from a fine collection of this nature, but two essays are of particular interest. Jenifer Wilson Barnett, who is a professor of nursing studies, writes on inequality among health care professionals and on the ethical dimensions of their relationship. She questions the myth of team-work, which too often is something to which mere lip service is paid. Nurses are consulted, but not necessarily listened to; nurses are not informed of the reasons for decisions which they will be implementing; the catalogue of concerns is, it would appear, fairly long. Greater equality, she argues, involves greater respect, and leads to better nursing of the patient. These goals are now increasingly acknowledged, but it would seem that we have some way to go before they are achieved.

Ian Kennedy and Andrew Grubb, in their joint essay on HIV, AIDS and human rights, also concern themselves with equality. The theoretical commitment which our society has to a non-censorious approach to the ill is not matched by a practical outlawing of discriminatory practices. Kennedy and Grubb demonstrate that in a range of areas the law fails to provide those who are HIV-positive or suffering from AIDS with any real degree of protection against discriminatory treatment. This is so in the area of employment law, where HIV-positive employees have less than full protection against dismissal as a result of the concern of other employees or customers, and it is also so, in very marked form, in relation to insurance. It must be accepted that insurance is a business, legitimately concerned with profit, but it is also all about risk-sharing, and one might have thought

that this is a classic case where risk should be shared. If AIDS is going to result in increased expenditure from the insurance industry – as it undoubtedly will – then this could surely be spread through generally increased premiums. The commercial justification for discriminatory practices, including the controversial refusal of insurance where negative test results have been obtained, should then fall away. Also at stake, as the authors stress, are issues of privacy. The 'life-style' question is intrusive, too broad-brush, and gives rise to real ethical concern. Certain other countries have been very much more assiduous in their protection of the rights of those afflicted by this condition. We lag behind – again. The reasons for this are complex, but are not unconnected with difficulties we have in the United Kingdom with reform in the area of individual human rights. The constitutional reform which that requires seems, for some reason, simply not to be on the agenda.

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## Law reform and human reproduction

Edited by Sheila McLean,  
Dartmouth, Dartmouth Publishing  
Group, 1992, 323 pages, £35.00 hc

'Another book on human reproduction', one might be pardoned for sighing. Yet, but. In this collection, Sheila McLean has brought together an astonishingly broad range of authors from a large number of countries to write about national experience in this area of law reform. This makes the book different, and worthwhile, bearing in mind the difficulties of obtaining material on the way in which the task of dealing with the new reproductive techniques has been dealt with elsewhere.

There are contributions from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, the United Kingdom, and (the former) Czechoslovakia. There is no contribution from Germany, which is an omission, given the very particular nature of the debate on such questions there. It would also have been useful to compare the guilt-affected German