

Book Reviews

1970s, too, there has been a shift towards greater public involvement in health care, giving India, at least on paper, an impressive infrastructure of rural health centres. By the standards of neighbouring Pakistan, India seems relatively well provided with health-care resources.

There is much to be commended in Dr Jeffery's book. While it is less comprehensive in its discussion of the colonial than the post-colonial period and while it does not attempt to give a full account of the nature of the health problems confronted, it usefully brings together, within a critical and analytical framework, disparate material and conflicting lines of argument. In relating health provisioning to wider economic and political changes, it manages to avoid an unqualified "political economy" approach. A welcome addition in itself, this book will surely be a stimulus to further research and controversy.

David Arnold

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

LINDA BRYDER, *Below the magic mountain: a social history of tuberculosis in twentieth-century Britain*, Oxford Historical Monographs, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988, 8vo, pp. xiv, 298, illus., £30.00.

It is odd that historians have disregarded tuberculosis. More than other maladies which have preoccupied them, it was a leading cause of mortality, morbidity, and wretchedness. In this century, pulmonary TB has crucially provoked administrative interventions and policies aimed at financially and socially supporting sufferers.

Linda Bryder has now provided us with a thoroughly researched, accurate, and carefully considered survey of TB and its consequences in Britain between 1900 and 1960. Her book should be widely read, not least because it gently but persuasively corrects celebratory medical reminiscences, folk memories, and historians' assertions founded on them.

It is a melancholy story. TB management consumed almost as much money as maternal and child welfare in the early 1920s but produced little prevention or cure. Sanatoria, which swallowed much of the resources, housed a tiny proportion of the active cases and despite their directors' pretensions and dodgy statistics, lost up to 80 per cent of their allegedly restored patients within five years of discharge. This rate was probably worse than that for consumptives who never entered a sanatorium, especially when we consider the sanatoria promoters' claims to admit only "early" cases with good prognoses. Similar conclusions emerge from Dr Bryder's review of chest surgery. I would have like her to have pursued the problem of how such a futile system retained the esteem of politicians, local government officers, the general public, and many consumptives.

As with other intractable illnesses, medical practitioners, philanthropists, bureaucrats, and the consumptives themselves tended to blame the victim. There was a concomitant loss of citizenship. Sanatoria or Poor Law cases, and attenders at dispensaries, were subject to invasions of privacy, pointless controls and dangerous procedures, the outcomes of which were untried. Some of the procedures, complete rest and overfeeding, for example, are now regarded as useless or even damaging. Dr Bryder has drawn on the Frimley Sanatorium follow-up records to build a memorable picture of private anguish, stigmatization, and domestic and neighbourhood disruption. The Frimley authorities' relentless pursuit of their inmates up to 35 years after discharge becomes nightmarish when we realize that these records apparently were never used for any worthwhile epidemiological purpose. Dr Bryder's account of the professional opposition to introducing BCG to Britain reveals similar abuses of power and parochialism.

The only comfort conveyed by this monitory book is the fairly steady decline of TB mortality throughout the period, within a context of improving living standards, despite the misallocation of resources.

F. B. Smith

Australian National University

HAROLD ATTWOOD and GEOFFREY KENNY (editors), *Reflections on medical history and health in Australia*, Third National Conference on Medical History and Health in Australia 1986, Parkville, Medical History Unit, University of Melbourne, 1987, 8vo, pp. viii, 278, illus., A\$20.00 (paperback).