

generously acknowledges the contributions made by Dianne Norton, Co-ordinator of the Forum for the Right of the Elderly to Education, who provides a detailed account of current educational opportunities for, and take-up by, older people, and Hilary Todd, Senior Information Officer at the Centre for Policy on Ageing, who presents an analysis on the learning patterns of older students. These two substantive topics form the main part of the monograph. Dr Midwinter's contribution is to preface these sections with an introductory essay on the social importance of education within the 'ageing' debate, and to base upon their findings some propositions about further actions in this field. Dr Midwinter constructs three categories of recommendations which he addresses to central government, local statutory and conventional providers of adult education, and the voluntary movement respectively. In his view, government should make a large sum of money readily available for the development of new schemes for the education of elderly people; that statutory providers should appoint tutors with the task of facilitating the growth and promotion of educational groups among elderly people; and finally, that local voluntary and other agencies should offer facilities and support for educational activities among elderly people.

Stated at this level of generality, this sounds rather like another plea to central and local government and other providers for more financial and human resources to be made available during a period of competing and conflicting claims on restricted public expenditure on education. Such an interpretation would not do justice to the strongly argued case of Dr Midwinter and his associates, based on critical research findings and exemplars of good practice, for the recognition of the importance of education for the elderly. A reconstruction of our attitudes and beliefs would lead one to share the conviction of the authors that a strategy for providing the opportunity for meeting the educational needs of the older person in our community rests on the careful management of a small financial increase in the present provision, and an imaginative use of self-help learning co-operatives.

The monograph provides a good introduction to gaining some understanding of the questions and issues dealing with an increasingly important field in education. Policy-makers in particular have much to gain from this publication.

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*Journal of the American College of Nutrition*, volume 1, number 1, Alan R. Liss, New York, 1982, 136 pp., no price.

Nutrition has been called 'a cornerstone of preventive medicine'. In the knowledge of an expanding elderly population, we are compelled to take seriously the involvement of nutrition with ageing, and its contribution to health in old age. Appropriately, therefore, this first issue of the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* is devoted almost exclusively to the subject. It

contains selected papers from a symposium on Nutrition in Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine, held by the college in 1981.

The first paper sets the scene, with a review of some important relationships between nutrition and ageing. Nathan Shock, author of this award-winning lecture, is a leading expert on the physiology of ageing.

Themes outlined by Shock are taken up by subsequent authors in more specific discussion. For example, the mechanistic role of nutrition in physiological ageing is discussed by Denman Harman, with reference to the popular 'Free Radical Theory'. The other side of the coin – namely the effect of ageing on nutritional status – is considered in Robert Lindeman's review on mineral metabolism. Current knowledge of the effects of age on nutrient metabolism is scant. The review therefore concentrates on metabolic abnormalities in the elderly.

There are two papers on diet and disease prevention. One reviews the role of several nutrients in carcinogenesis. The other focuses more narrowly on the relationship between high-density lipoprotein cholesterol and coronary heart disease.

The symposium title suggests therapeutic, as well as preventive aspects of nutrition. Two clinical reports of nutritional therapy in elderly patients are presented. Both highlight the importance of corrective diagnostic distinction between pathology and normal ageing.

In general, the clinical orientation of this publication makes it as pertinent to the British as to the American reader. One exceptional paper describes the role of government in the support and coordination of nutrition research in the United States.

The editors have achieved a variety of approaches to the theme of Nutrition and Gerontology. Specific reports as well as more general reviews are included. The material presented will be of considerable value to readers having a medical interest in nutrition and ageing. However, behavioural aspects of the subject are scarcely mentioned.

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