

its impact on regulation (in 1900) in Prussia; research on a chemotherapy for sleeping sickness in the German colonies; the German Reich guidelines on human trials of 1930/31; the Lübeck BCG vaccination tragedy; and the concentration camp experiments in Nazi Germany, the Nuremberg Medical Trial and the Nuremberg Code.

For the post-war period, there are discussions of the whistle-blowing of Maurice Pappworth and Henry K Beecher about ethically questionable human trials in Britain and the United States. In a contribution on the genesis of the Declaration of Helsinki (1964), Susan Lederer argues that this (still) important document owed much to American influence, in particular the interests of US pharmaceutical companies in the development of new drugs and vaccines. The volume presents an international, though not strictly comparative, perspective by including case studies on the history of research on human subjects in Russia and the Soviet Union, the Czech Republic, France, Japan, USA, and Israel.

There are some generic issues raised in this collection. Paul Weindling's and Boris Yudin's essays, for example, draw attention to the differing interpretations of unethical human experimentation as being due to a general, morally corrupting influence of a totalitarian state or the activities of unscrupulous and opportunistic individual scientists. Paul J Edelson as well as Giovanni Maio suggest that an adequate understanding of twentieth-century doctors' attitudes towards the ethics of human trials requires consideration of the "culture of honour" that was crucial for the identity formation of the Anglo-American and French (and I would add: German) medical profession. Generally, in the issue of informed consent to experimentation, the traditional culture of medical paternalism increasingly conflicted with legal notions of a right to self-determination of the individual.

Another theme of this volume is religious perspectives on human experimentation. Etienne Lepicard, in a case study on French priests' comments before the endorsement of the Nuremberg Code's principles by Pope Pius XII in

1952, records a "multiplicity of Catholic voices", in which the issues of social usefulness and patient consent featured besides the principle of the sanctity of human life. Similarly, Gerhard Baader, in an essay on Jewish halachic views, shows how progress in medicine due to human trials was integrated under the harmonizing principle of saving or prolonging life.

The collection closes with contributions on the history of human population genetics since the 1950s, examining examples from Israel (indicating the influence of Zionist ideas), from the United States (pointing to racial prejudices in studies on the assumed link between XYY karyotype men and criminal behaviour), and Iceland. The paper by Pei P Koay, on the Icelandic deCODE genetic database, raises the important question whether this kind of research requires a new ethics. Significantly, with the parliamentary approval of the Icelandic Health Sector Database Act in 1998, the state of Iceland gave consent for all its citizens to be included in this nationwide genetic and health database project. Citizens unwilling to take part in the project were required explicitly to opt out.

Ranging in its coverage from the first public debates on potentially dangerous trials on uninformed hospital patients in Imperial Germany to this latest challenge of genetic and public health research ethics, this volume recommends itself through its comprehensiveness. It will be useful reading to anyone concerned with, or about, the history and ethics of human experimentation.

Andreas-Holger Maehle,
Durham University

Esteban Rodríguez-Ocaña (ed.), *The politics of the healthy life: an international perspective*, History of Medicine, Health and Disease series, Sheffield, European Association for the History of Medicine and Health Publications, 2002, pp. ix, 288, UK £34.95, Europe £37.92, elsewhere £41.86 (hardback 0-9536522-5-4).

This edited collection brings together some ten of the papers given originally to a conference—"The Healthy Life: People,

Perceptions, and Politics’—held under the auspices of the European Association for the History of Medicine and Health in 1999. With one exception—that of Kearns and Laxton, whose piece is on the mid-nineteenth century—the essays focus, to varying degrees, on the first half of the twentieth century. Aside from the Introduction by the editor, the book is divided into two sections: ‘Local contexts, international settings’ and ‘The international theatre and the locus of expertise’. The former contains essays by Gerry Kearns and Paul Laxton (on the Famine Irish in Liverpool); Pedro Samblás Tilve (on drug use in early twentieth-century Spain); Alfredo Menéndez Navarro (on the debate over the dangers of asbestos in Britain in the 1930s); and Shirish Naresh Kavadi (on the hookworm campaign in 1920s Madras). As the section title suggests, these essays seek, as it happens successfully, to locate particular local issues in a much broader context. So, for example, as Kearns and Laxton point out in their thought-provoking essay, the handling of Irish Famine victims by the authorities in Liverpool was “not just a local affair, nor was it a crude reaction to an alien horde that could be described in terms of class” (p. 34). Rather, it showed how the cosmopolitan city of Liverpool reacted in a complex way to a group whose status was highly ambiguous both in the city itself and in the wider polity which then constituted the United Kingdom.

The second section comprises pieces of a more overtly international character: by Paul Weindling (on the “new public health” of the first half of the twentieth century); John Hutchinson (on international movements in child health in the 1920s); Gabriele Moser and Jochen Fleischhacker (on the modernization of social hygiene in Weimar Germany); Marcos Cueto (on social medicine in the Andes, 1920–1950); Lion Murard and Patrick Zylberman (on French social medicine in its international context in the 1930s); and James Gillespie (on international health from the perspective of social security and social medicine). As with the previous section, it is invidious to single out any one contribution. But it is perhaps worth mentioning the essay by the late John Hutchinson. As he rightly points

out, the impact of the First World War on children and their health was immense, and the inter-war period saw a range of initiatives, by both official and voluntary bodies, designed to alleviate child suffering. These took place at both national and international levels, with perhaps the most famous of the latter being the Declaration of the Rights of the Child passed by the League of Nations in 1924. The actual success of these initiatives, though, is another matter, about which Hutchinson displays a justified scepticism. This illustrates, *inter alia*, all too clearly the difficulties inherent in seeking to improve health—and of course here there are endless problems of definition—at an international level.

This collection of essays, to which this review has in such a short space done scant justice, deserves a wide readership. The editor is to be commended in bringing these papers to publication in this admirable series. The Introduction concludes by saying that the collection “is designed to enhance our understanding of modern society and elucidate the cultural meaning of medicine as a historical agent, and, above all, to raise many more questions than answers” (p. 7). There is no doubt that these are important contributions in themselves to understanding health in its international context; and, moreover, will provide a platform for future debate, discussion, and research.

John Stewart,
Oxford Brookes University

Barbara Bridgman Perkins, *The medical delivery business: health reform, childbirth, and the economic order*, New Brunswick, and London, Rutgers University Press, 2004, pp. xii, 253, £31.95 (hardback 0-8135-3328-7).

Health care consultant Barbara Bridgman Perkins is one of the original members of the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective and a contributor to *Our bodies, ourselves*. First published as a booklet in 1970, *Our bodies, ourselves* aimed to provide women with the