

cirrhosis. Those who are dependent will be expected to agree to maintain abstinence after the transplant. Any alcohol use thereafter must be taken as a very serious clinical sign and evidence of a high risk to the long-term viability of the graft, although the evidence for this is not as clear as might be expected. Factors which have to be carefully considered during pre-operative assessment include the patient's recognition that an alcohol problem exists, and his or her willingness to make fundamental change in life style. A period of abstinence of a minimum of six months prior to operation is often a prerequisite. Evidence of stability characterised by maintaining a job for the past three years and a stable residence within a stable relationship are positive prognostic factors. The authors also rate patients' suitability in terms of their capacity to identify in the future satisfying substitute activities other than drinking, a source of improved hope of self-esteem, clear evidence that the negative consequences of drinking are understood by the patient, and the presence of a 'safety valve' person. Rating scales dependent on the above criteria have enabled psychiatrists to reach reasonably good judgements about suitability.

The authors recognise that these decisions can seem judgemental and that ethical considerations are very significant. A final chapter focuses on the ethics surrounding choice and rehearses the arguments around whether society is justified in denying scarce and finite resource to individuals who have what some regard as a self induced illness. It may be argued that many severe illnesses are in part attributable to patients' conduct, for example lung cancer and smoking or overeating and heart disease. It seems likely that the stigma which often attaches to alcoholics is an additional but scarcely justified burden which they sometimes bear in the decision-making process. As they point out, "... the operative difference in many people's thinking is that alcohol consumption has been traditionally regarded as a vice whereas smoking, overeating, sedentary life style and so on have not. If this were so, however, the argument relies more heavily on shallow moralizing than on a genuine ethical difference."

This is an interesting and succinct monography which will be of particular value to those whose work regularly brings them into contact with decisions about transplantation. It is a field of great importance to liaison psychiatrists working closely with physicians and surgeons and it is also one that challenges our thinking about the allocation of scarce resources.

BRUCE RITSON, *Consultant, Alcohol Problems Clinic, Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Edinburgh EH10 5HF*

**The Learning of Communication Skills and Psychotherapy.** By doctors training in psychiatry and working in South West Thames RHA: Educational Goals Contents and Processes. 1993. Department of Mental Health Sciences, St George's Hospital Medical School, Tooting, London SW17 0RE. Pp 54. £4.00 (Cheques should be made payable to St George's Hospital Special Trustees)

This is an unusual publication published privately by St George's and clearly of particular relevance to local trainees. Nevertheless it is an interesting document showing why St George's have been at the forefront of psychotherapy training for registrars. This is of particular relevance following the recent publication of the revised guidelines produced jointly by the general psychiatry and psychotherapy sections of the College (*Psychiatric Bulletin*, 1993, 17, 695-698).

The booklet covers goals and objectives for basic communication skills, dynamic psychotherapies, and behavioural therapies. There are appendices on the educational contents and processes for each of these and particular reference to senior registrar training.

There are two main reasons for local tutors to obtain this booklet: there is a section giving the logistics of providing training and associated lectures, and also a prescient account of skills and competencies required.

Psychotherapists have been concerned by a recent attempt by the Department of Employment to express psychotherapy in terms of component skills. There is, of course, a risk of crass reductionism inherent in such an attempt. However, the St George's staff have succeeded in keeping a clinical feel to their descriptions. Moreover the descriptions are fully up to date in following the GMC terminology of the "knowledge, attitudes and skills" triad.

The rate of change is so rapid that some sections are already outdated (not least the shift from training being desirable to the current situation where it is mandatory). For this reason it is probably best used by a tutor in drawing up teaching programmes rather than as a self-teaching text.

FRANK MARGISON, *Consultant Psychotherapist, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Manchester M13 9WL*

**Report of the Health Service Commissioner: failure to provide long-term NHS care for a brain-damaged patient.** London: HMSO. Pp 9. £3.40.

The provision of health services for those people who require comprehensive nursing care but do not need full hospital facilities is a contentious