

Book Reviews

Is This Your Child? Discovering and Treating Unrecognized Allergies by

Doris Rupp, MD, FAAS, FAAP. William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1991. Hardcover, 384 pages, \$21.95 U.S.

The most heroic doctors practising today are clinical ecologists, for they face some of the most difficult and puzzling afflictions. The patients they see suffer from an amazing variety of symptoms and signs which cause enormous suffering and pain, and even death. These are allergic reactions to one or more chemicals within our environment. These chemicals are complex molecules like foods, living organisms like house dust mites or other parasites, or simple like antibiotics, insecticides, herbicides, petrochemicals, or any one of a large number of chemicals which are poured into our soil, water and air each year. They are usually difficult patients — that is to ordinary physicians — for they can find no reason for their illnesses, nor any effective treatment. These patients do not disappear, however, they keep coming back until, out of frustration and despair, they seek another physician or seek a nonmedical healer. There are too few alternative physicians who will undertake to diagnose and treat these problems.

Dr. Doris Rupp is one of these few. The clinical ecologists do their job of helping patients recover, while at the same time having to face the criticism and anger of their colleagues, who know little about clinical ecology, except that they are convinced that allergies play no role.

This book is a basic primer for patients and their families. It describes what allergies are, the kinds of symptoms they produce, how they can be diagnosed and — most importantly — how they can be treated successfully.

Clinical ecologists are at least twenty years ahead of the rest of medicine. It may take another twenty years before general medicine becomes familiar with these concepts so that they can begin to help many more of their

patients. One day, every properly educated physician will be a clinical ecologist, and will also know a good deal about nutrition and nutrients, that is, will also be an Orthomolecular physician.

A. Hoffer, M.D., Ph.D.

Help for the Hyperactive Child by

William G. Crook, M.D. Professional Books, P.O. Box 3246, Jackson, TN 38302. Paperback (8 1/2 x 11 inches), 245 pages, \$14.95 U.S.

Hyperactive is one of the terms used to describe children with learning and/or behavioral disorders. It is probably the first and most easily recognized symptom, especially by parents who have had experience with children who are normal. If the first born child is hyperactive, it may be difficult to decide whether the very active child may be pathologically hyperactive, because there is no one with whom to compare. If it appears in the second child, recognition is much easier. But there is no sharp line of demarcation above which the child is hyperactive, or below which he/she is not hyperactive. It also depends upon the energy and endurance of the parents. Some parents also tend to be full of energy and have little difficulty keeping up with their hyperactive child. Other parents are less endowed and tire much more readily. The tired parent will realize sooner there is a problem. In fact, one of the ways I have of determining how hyperactive the child is, is by having a look at the parents to see how exhausted they appear to be. Then there is the second problem of getting an official diagnosis from a physician. Physicians today see so many highly-active and hyperactive children, they may look upon this as normal behavior; they reason that what is common must be normal. In addition, children are often very fearful of going to see their doctor, and this acts as a kind of sedative. They may therefore be a model of good behavior during the first interview. The doctor witnesses a quiet, well-behaved child (usually a blond, blue-eyed boy), and hears a distraught mother

describe a very active child and how she is notable to deal with him. I have lost count of the number of parents who tell me how their general practitioner or pediatrician told them that their child was completely well, and that the problem was with the mother. Parents ought to take the child back to the same physician at least three times. By then the sedative effect of fear, that is adrenalin secretion, is gone, and the doctor will see a truly hyperactive child.

Hyperactivity is usually associated with other types of abnormal behavior and difficulties in learning, even when the child is very intelligent.

The diagnosis is very important because it will determine treatment, but it must be a causal diagnosis. The vast majority of children are hyperactive because they are reacting to allergies, mostly to foods, or to nutritional deficiencies such as vitamin or mineral problems. These are related, since the child who is allergic to foods may have severe gastrointestinal problems, and be unable to fully absorb essential nutrients.

When the diagnosis is established, treatment — in theory — is easy, but in practise may be very difficult. It is easy to advise parents to place

their child on an elimination diet: first to establish the diagnosis, and secondly to initiate treatment. But this may be very difficult and confusing to parents not familiar with nutrition and food allergies. Parents need a clear, simple, elegant primer — a book which they can follow step-by-step, something like a cookbook with recipes, which will tell them exactly what they should do.

This volume by Dr. William Crook is such a book. It is another in a series of excellent books he has published and made available to the public. It contains information parents, and even older children, need to establish the diagnosis and a treatment program. In fact, it occurs to me that some children might have fun colouring the excellent diagrams in this book, and this would make this book much more interesting for them.

I certainly do endorse this book and recommend that every parent of a hyperactive or disturbed child ought to read it, because of the valuable information they will gain there from. This is a high quality book, with large print so that even grandparents can read it quite easily.

A. Hoffer, M.D., Ph.D.