

Book Reviews

Treating Autism. Parent Stories of Hope and Success

by S.M. Edelson and B. Rimland
Autism Research Institute
San Diego CA, 2003
Paperback, 385 pages

Bernard Rimland has contributed more toward our understanding of autism, its epidemiology, psychology, biochemistry, and treatment, than any other single person. Bernie and I are not only getting old, we are also old friends and colleagues since we first got to know each other and began to work together more than 45 years ago. For years he was on our Treatment Committee of the American Schizophrenia Association, later the Huxley Institute of Biosocial Research. Before he could really begin his vital investigations and studies, he had to clear the decks by removing infantile autism from the clutches of the psychoanalysts who were convinced these unfortunate young patients were the product of bad mothers and that biochemistry and physiology played no role. His first book, *Infantile Autism*, was very effective. Bernie also believed that it was a disease with real physiological factors; he was the first in the field to embrace orthomolecular medicine and to encourage large scale studies which showed that pyridoxine was therapeutic for many of the children but that it must be given with magnesium as well. I have saved every issue of his very good newsletter, which I cherish, and I appreciate the many publications coming from him and the Institute.

Bernie discovered, as I did so many years ago, that it is very difficult to break a new idea into the medical profession and for that reason it is important to diffuse the information into the public most concerned, and of course these are the parents of autistic children. These parents are usually very intelligent, well read, sophisticated and very determined. I cannot re-

call any parents more determined than these parents are to do something for their children. An example was a young mother who brought her seven-year-old autistic son to see me. She told me that he had been under treatment since infancy by the best autism clinic in town with very little response. After she read about the possible role of allergies to wheat and milk products she asked the clinic about this; they laughed at her. This made her even more determined and on her own she eliminated these foods. One month later he was normal; this was confirmed by the clinic.

Treating Autism, co-authored by Stephen Edelson, is a welcome addition to the public educational program to provide information to the families, so that even if their doctors are not sympathetic they can seek and find some who are and can teach their doctor what they have learned about autism. The main object of this book is to educate the families and secondarily the physicians, and therefore it is written in a more informal style, making it much more persuasive and impressive.

Part One is the professional contribution where the authors describe the history of the institute and the more recent Defeat Autism Now! (DAN!) project and meetings. The important nutrient factors such as vitamin B₆ and magnesium, dimethyl glycine, and vitamin C are discussed. Part Two is written more directly for parents, who are given a large number of case histories of children and what had to do be done in order to get them well or very much better. These stories are very persuasive and because there are so many, very few parents will fail to find one or more who resemble their own children, Academic psychiatrists do not publicly endorse case histories, which they demean by calling them anecdotes. However privately and in general medicine case histories are the most valuable way of teaching. I think they are very valuable. I have treated a small number of autistic children and can con-

firm that when they are treated as described in this book, they do show major responses.

I endorse the message in *Treating Autism* and recommend that everyone confronted with these problems get the book which provides the background information needed to follow the very exciting new developments in the field of autism. The book will also help the reader to understand why autism has become more prevalent, what role the mercury in vaccines play and the diets which help autistic children's special digestive needs. The future is indeed very bright. Thanks Stephen Edelson and Bernie!

—A. Hoffer, M.D., Ph.D.

Healing the Planet One Patient at a Time

by J.J. Krop

KOS Publishing Co, Alton ON, 1997

Paperback, 354 pages

Environmental medicine is that branch of medicine which studies the impact of our environment on our growth, development and physical and mental health. One would think that this would be so well established that this book would be essential reading for every medical student. On the contrary, modern medicine is so preoccupied with drugs, surgery and psychiatry that it is blind to the forces which are so important in shaping our lives. Modern medicine also neglects the values of good, healthy food and the use of nutrients, the vitamins and minerals, essential fatty acids and other food components, which are essential to life. Yet for the past 2000 years the only real tool doctors had was the use of food.

Healing the Planet discusses more than the impact of the environment upon us. It also indicates what we have done to our environment. A well know student of the impact of soils on our health estimated

that if we suddenly ceased polluting the globe it might take several hundred years before our globe will have cleansed itself of all the chemicals we have dumped into our air, water, soils and thus into our foods and, of course, into our bodies.

Humankind has always been aggressively adventuresome and this is why we spread across the globe from the arctic regions to the equator. If we had not had that spirit of adventure built into our genes we might have thought a lot before we acted and perhaps we would have been better off. If the early Norsemen had thought deeply about the consequence of their invasion of North America they might have been deterred from doing so. If, when table sugar became available, we had examined carefully what impact this would have upon our health we would not be as sick as we are today. Who could have foreseen that a substance that tastes so good and could so easily be incorporated into everything we eat could be so dangerous and damaging? The consequence of sugar as food could have been studied even 3000 hundred years ago. There is a precedent in the Bible. When Daniel insisted that the young men under his charge could not be healthy on the food provided for them in the palace and demonstrated that they were healthier than other young men from other areas who did not follow their food rules he ran the first recorded controlled nutritional experiment. After several weeks it was apparent that Daniel was correct and he and his men were permitted to follow their own food principles.

When we happily added lead to our gasoline and felt so much better because our cars did not ping as much, did we think about the impact of dumping tons of lead into our atmosphere to be ingested by everyone especially by children who live in an atmosphere only 3 feet above the ground where lead accumulates? Must we continue to do the same forever, act first, profit from it and regret our move later and pay the

price for having acted without forethought.

Healing the Planet provides us with the basic information that if followed will guide us in: (1) cleansing our planet and decreasing pollution; (2) curing or healing the millions of people who are already sick and dying and; (3) curing the environment by reversing the changes and allowing it to gradually cleanse itself.

This is not the usual book review. I have not examined each chapter. I read this book and I endorse it. It should be a required text for every physician. Joe Krop must be congratulated for writing it at a time when he was under massive assault from the Ontario College of Physician and Surgeons. He should have been honoured and encouraged but instead had to fight for his medical life. We will all have to have the same determination and toughness to cleanse our planet as Dr. Krop had in surviving and in writing this excellent book.

—A. Hoffer, M.D., Ph.D.

Down Syndrome and Vitamin Therapy

by Kent MacLeod

Kemanso Publishing Inc., Ottawa ON
2003, Paperback, 254 pages

I first heard about Dr. Turkel's work with Down syndrome in 1953 but dismissed it as not important. At that time I was an establishment physician learning psychiatry and trying to develop a research program in psychiatry in Saskatchewan. I suffered from the usual ignorance that so many of my colleagues still suffer. Several years later as I became more disillusioned with the impact of drugs and began to see much better results from the use of nutrition and vitamins I reviewed his work and began a campaign to bring it to the attention of the medical world. I published several of Turkel's papers in this journal, and invited him several times to speak to our group of medical friends at the American Schizophrenia Association and orthomo-

lecular societies sponsored by the Huxley Institute of Biosocial Research. I read his books, saw some of the patients he had treated and became convinced that he had made a major break through into the rational treatment of this disease.

I am sorry that he was harassed by the FDA in the United States until, eventually, he won approval to distribute his treatment within the state of Michigan. I know it happens all the time but why do pioneers have to be subjected to this kind of cruel and inhuman treatment? I sometimes believe that the greatest sin in medicine is to practice outside the box. Getting someone well by using an unrecognized treatment is the worst possible sin and often leads to the death of one's practice. In the days of the Guilds in medieval Europe it did lead to actual death. Three hundred years ago, Dr. Thomas Sydenham, later Sir Thomas, nearly lost his licence and was challenged to a duel by a colleague because he suggested that increasing the fever in small pox patients was not the best way to treat them. Dr. Turkel at last received friendly acceptance from Bernard Rimland who took on the distribution of his books when he retired to Israel.

Turkel would have been excited about the work being done in Ottawa by Kent MacLeod and his group in assessing the biochemical characteristics of individuals with Down syndrome and with autism, and preparing a personal therapeutic program based upon those findings. These are described in this very good book.

One of the features I especially liked was MacLeod's use of photographs when describing some of the patients who were treated. Each section describing a child is introduced by the photograph; this makes the case much more meaningful and exciting. You will discover how Marie Eve, Jonathan, Jordan, Clara, Michael, Molly and Megan, Austin, Kailin, Jacob and William were treated and the remarkable results of that treatment. I wrote the

book's foreword, which, of course, I never do for books I do not find of any value. Kent describes how he became involved, what he and his laboratory do and concludes with a very useful section which provides information that parents of sick children will find most helpful and valuable.

Kent's approach is orthomolecular, perhaps second generation orthomolecular, because he depends more on laboratory findings. We, the first generation of orthomolecular practitioners, had to depend upon

clinical observations although we did make a start by introducing concepts such as pyrroluria which is found in up to fifty percent of Autistic children and in the division of the schizophrenic syndrome into three major groups by Carl Pfeifer: the high histamine, the low histamine and pyrroluria.

If you know of a friend or relative with Down syndrome or autism buy this book and give it to them. If they take it seriously, they will love you forever.

—A. Hoffer, M.D., Ph.D.