

BOOK REVIEWS

ALLERGY, BRAINS, AND CHILDREN COPING

**Ray C. Wunderlich, Johnny Reads Inc., St.
Petersburg, Florida, 1973, Pp. 170.**

This book is a welcome addition to a rapidly developing literature which deals with children exhibiting learning and behavioral disorders. Dr. Ray Wunderlich's message is aptly summarized by his laconic statement where he recommends "detailed medical investigation and flexible treatment." It is odd that such a sensible statement should need to be said, but many workers in this field will be shocked, horrified, and even frightened by the idea that these children are suffering from a functional disease of the brain which can be diagnosed by careful medical investigation and treated by appropriate medical therapy, counselling and developmental optometry.

The procedure followed by Dr. Wunderlich is as follows:

(1) Careful medical examination including laboratory tests. The investigation is designed to determine the role played by allergy, by need for vitamins, by the excess of junk food (especially table sugar and foods adulterated by the addition of sugars). Allergies are determined by facial appearance, by a clinical history of common symptoms such as bedwetting, running noses, puffy eyes, hearing problems, and so on.

Elimination diets and skin tests are helpful as well as eosinophil counts. Hypoglycemia is elicited by sugar-tolerance tests, but should be suspected in every child who is too fond of sweets.

(2) Treatment. A large portion of these children are allergic to a variety of chemicals including food, pollens, fumes, and so on. His treatment program includes elimination of offending foods, desensitization to other chemicals, and when necessary antihistamines. But he also uses corticosteroid hormones, something new in this field. This is used very carefully under medical supervision in very low doses and only for short periods of time. The detailed case histories do illustrate very well the efficacy of this treatment. In nearly every case it is not a permanent treatment. He also uses megavitamins as indicated. In brief this pediatrician is flexible in his treatment approach. Dr. Wunderlich is a "poly-pharmakos." The early Creeks defined a polypharmakos as a physician skillful in the use of drugs. For reasons which are strange, modern physicians decry polypharmacy, and psychiatrists who have no contact with patients and who replace reason with double-blind techniques are much opposed to the polypharmakos. The double-blind physician and the polypharmakos are inherently contradictory to each other.

If your child falls into the group of the learning and behavioral disorders (for

which there are about 100 different names) do not take him to a physician who is not a polypharmakos. Beware the physician who finds every child to be ill due to one cause (mothers, fathers, allergies, need for vitamins) and cling to the physician who is a polypharmakos—a physician skillful in the use of drugs.

This is a good book. Do not hesitate to place it in your medical library—a library every person should have.

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**THE ORIGIN AND TREATMENT OF
SCHIZOPHRENIC DISORDERS**

Theodore Lidz, Basic Books Inc., New York, 1973, Pp. 145.

The cover of this book declaims "Dr. Lidz presents a unified theory of schizophrenic disorders that is at once comprehensive, beautifully simple and firmly grounded in extensive research findings" and "a small but increasing number of investigators have been accumulating evidence in support of the pioneering work of Dr. T. Lidz and others that points to distortions in the family setting as being the primary causative factor in schizophrenia."

It is indeed possible to sympathize with Dr. Lidz' conclusions provided one takes oneself back in time to 1945, provided one ignores all the genetic and therapeutic studies which have accumulated since then. This is what Dr. T. Lidz

has succeeded in doing.

However, it is possible, even if very unlikely, for Dr. Lidz' etiological suggestions to be totally correct in spite of the massive contrary evidence. Perhaps the treatment which arises from his work does cure a large number of patients. I, therefore, searched the book very carefully for evidence that Lidzian family therapy does work. I could find no detailed case histories, no series of cases, no anecdotes, none of the clinical evidence usually expected by any person willing to judge the efficacy of a treatment. Instead we find advice to therapists on how to counsel, how to understand, but not how to present real clinical evidence. But then, this is an analytic book which follows the classic style of all psychoanalytic books, i.e., detailed discussion of the technique of treatment, nothing about the results of treatment. When a schizophrenic patient recovers it usually results in a book. Since Lidz does not even give a paragraph to a recovery, I must assume he knew of no such cases.

It has been said scientists are never persuaded to change their views. It is obvious Dr. T. Lidz still has the same belief he developed very rapidly when he first started his training in neurology and psychiatry.

The title page on the cover is cute. The bottom half is upside down in minor writing. This is about the only appealing thing about this book.

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