

Book Reviews

Health and Happiness, by *E. Cheraskin*. Bio-Communications Press, 3100 N. Hillside Ave., Wichita, KS 67219, 1989. Paperback, 413 pages, \$14.95.

Orthomolecular physicians, clinical ecologists and nutritional therapists all emphasize that patients must take responsibility for staying well, and if sick, for doing what is necessary to get well; this may include consulting a physician. For most patients this is as far as they go. They are content to lay their complaints before their doctor and to leave the treatment to him or her. This usually means filling a prescription, having surgery, or — rarely — a diet sheet handout, eg. for peptic ulcer. Little initiative is expected from the patients. These patients are termed "pious", because their doctor's word is like the word of God. However, an increasing number of patients are more interested in taking charge of their health — in taking a lot more responsibility in the treatment or wellness project. They consider themselves competent to supervise treatment and call upon physicians and/or other health professionals for advice, much as they would call any consultant, say in engineering or accounting. The consultant does play a most important role since he has accumulated a vast amount of information which no lay person can equal without also becoming a physician. But they will also consult libraries, books, health food stores, medical journals and others. They will bring to their physician information about what they have done and how they have responded. Modern nutritionally minded physicians expect and encourage this.

People who would like to be healthier or who are ill may not know how to start the process of taking charge of their own health — something not taught in school. Dr. Cheraskin's

book is one of the first books to help these people. It contains the information they will need to determine if they are well, and how well, and if they are not, what they can *do* to start the process. It is not a treatment manual, but it does contain much important treatment material.

The book is very well organized to provide information. The reader is immediately introduced to questionnaires, their scoring, and how to use the scores to answer their questions. A few common syndromes are examined in some detail: chronic fatigue, cancer, arthritis, and obesity. A couple of important indices of ill health: blood fat levels and blood glucose levels and their fluctuations, are tackled next. This is followed by a look at lifestyle factors such as nutrition, smoking, drinking, physical activity and sleep.

The questions are arranged skillfully. They answer the questions one will have, but — even more — provide information how one should proceed to improve one's health. If one scores high in one of the questionnaires, by studying the information contained in the questions one can begin the changes in lifestyle which will lead to lower scores, i.e. to better health. The questionnaires have been developed skillfully to be a teaching tool. To complement this, each chapter winds up with a list of books and articles one could study, with a brief abstract of each one.

I think this book will be a dandy teaching device which can help many people take charge of their lives and health. For those of us over 70, we can strive to be 70 going on 40 — even better, 80 going on 40.

Dr. E. Cheraskin has added another book to a large list of reports and books distinguished by their readability, the material covered, and by excellent reviews of the scientific literature from which his conclusions arise.

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