BOOK REVIEWS

All reviews are prepared on invitation. Unsolicited reviews cannot be accepted.


Classification in psychiatry is beset with a number of complex problems, and is further complicated by the fact that these problems must be tackled in the midst of a controversy as to whether psychopathology follows a medical model or a psychological-behavioral model. Regardless of the model one prefers, sound classification is essential for effective treatment and for basic—as well as clinical and epidemiologic—research. The editors of this book organized a conference to delineate the problems in classification in psychiatry and psychopathology, and to clarify the approaches used to deal with these problems. The book contains the papers presented at this conference, as well as the formal and spontaneous discussions. Since the authors, who are prominent specialists in clinical psychiatry, research in psychopathology, behavioral sciences, epidemiology, psychometrics, and statistics, were asked to submit papers well in advance of the conference for distribution to all of the participants, the papers and the discussions are sharply focused and of high quality.

Some 30 papers are presented in three groups: (1) the role of classification in psychiatric practice, in research, and in related disciplines; (2) methodology and statistics of classification; and (3) methodology involved in approaches toward new typologies. The editors present an unusually lucid overview of the conference, as well as a summary of the major issues. Individual papers in the first group discuss the role of classification in specific types of treatment settings and in specific types of research, such as epidemiology, medical care, social sciences, and biological sciences. In each, the importance of clarifying the purpose for which a classification is to be used is emphasized and the problems in classification are discussed, but the connection between purposes and problems is not always clearly drawn.

In leading off the second group of papers, Greenhouse presents, in non-mathematical terms, an unusually clear statement of the statistical issues in classification, provides definitions of the basic terminology, draws a distinction between discrimination and classification, and discusses the mixture and clustering problems. However, there were variations in the way terminology was used by others who discussed the statistical issues. For those interested in a more mathematical presentation, an excellent paper by Rao on discrimination among groups and assignment of new individuals is included.

The third set of papers presents attempts to develop typologies for specific conditions, such as depression, functional psychosis and schizophrenia, classification schemes based on psychological test performance, and systems based on responses to treatment. A wide variety of work in these areas is covered quite systematically in both the papers and the formal discussions.

Among the major issues emerging from the conference are the following: (1) The purposes of classification are quite different for the various specialists, and therefore a classification system must be evaluated on the basis of its relevance to a specific purpose; (2) diagnosis alone is unsatisfactory for many purposes; other variables, such as
age, sex, social group, response to treatment, must be considered in developing a classification scheme; (3) mathematical solutions to the mixture problems are not available, but descriptive procedures, such as clustering and factor analysis, have been used as approximate methods; the results then require further testing.

Although the book, reflecting the conference objectives, is not intended to present solution to the classification problems, it does clearly present the problems from a wide variety of viewpoints. Inasmuch as the problems and techniques are applicable to disease classification in general, this book is recommended as a valuable source document for persons engaged in medical research, medical care, and public health.

Earl S. Pollack


It is evident that the public health professionals who have contributed to this publication have not only extensive knowledge about alcoholism, but also experience in the development of alcoholism programs in public health. The book makes good on its promise that it is written "for professional health workers at the local level who wish to develop programs to deal with this serious community problem."

The text is divided into three main sections: Beverage Alcohol Use in American Society; Alcoholism; and Alcoholism Program Development. Health officers, statisticians, health educators, public health nurses, sanitarians, social workers, and all other disciplines who have an interest in alcoholism as a public health problem will find information that is pertinent. In a concise manner, the author provides a blueprint for alcoholism program development which includes organizational considerations, goals and objectives, resources, and even a "schema for developing a community perspective." Every conceivable aspect of developing an alcoholism program is included. In the bibliography are listed excellent resources which provide the specific details, wisely omitted from the text. The bibliography is conveniently arranged in sections which parallel the subheadings of the text.

Here, without a doubt, is another APHA classic for public health professionals.

J. B. Askew


The usual discussion of mental retardation gives it special parameters which make it easy for the reader to isolate and avoid. Dr. Farber presents it as a part of the ongoing social system. The clarification and structuring of many of the facets put the stigma and threat of mental retardation in proper perspective.

For a person in the mental health field who wishes to become more knowledgeable in this area, this book is an excellent introduction. The brief historical data, the classification, and the terminology are simple and lucid. Most interesting, however, is the discussion of these people as surplus population, the effect on them and their families of labeling, and the subsequent efforts to cope with the associated problems. The difficulties faced in families, in residential institutions, and in communities are clarified. Dr. Farber's solutions involve methods of social reform which will meet with disagreement from some areas. The extensive bibliography after each chapter offers good direction for further reading.

The textbook method of giving a pre-