

BOOK NOTES

The Economic Evolution of American Health Care: From Marcus Welby to Managed Care. By David Dranove. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002. Pp. 224.

Dranove explores the transformational effect of managed care organizations (MCOs) on physician behavior in the American health care system. While most observers believe that MCOs have had a negative impact on health, Dranove alternatively suggests that these free market enterprises possess the capacity to improve the quality of care for patients. The book recommends that MCOs improve their ways of measuring provider performance, make medical records complete and accessible, and enable patients to seek the best available care.

Safe Food: Bacteria, Biotechnology, and Bioterrorism. By Marion Nestle. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2003. Pp. 356.

This book attempts to answer the questions, "Who decides when a food is safe?" Nestle reveals how the powerful food industry lobby has fought against safety regulations, denied accountability for tragic mishaps, and blamed consumers. Magnifying the problem, government regulations in this area have been largely ineffective. In the end, consumers are left vulnerable to wide-scale food poisonings, genetically engineered "Frankenfoods" with long-term health consequences, and susceptibility to terrorist attacks on food and water supplies.

Death Is That Man Taking Names: Intersections of American Medicine, Law, and Culture. By Robert A. Burt. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2002. Pp. 232.

This book examines the psychological and social forces underlying American cultural attitudes and policymaking on the issue of death. Burt claims that the post-1970's prevailing notion of a "right to die" and patient autonomy rests on two fundamental assumptions: death benefits the individual for whom pain has become intolerable and death is inevitable and therefore a morally neutral biological event. This ethical position has been translated into public policy through landmark judicial decisions on abortion and capital punishment. Burt raises concerns, however, that the current ethical regime suppresses a powerful undercurrent of ambivalence and moral opposition towards death, which in turn, could ultimately erode the progressive reforms made in the system.

***Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor.* By Paul Farmer. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2003. Pp. 420.**

Farmer, a Professor of Medical Anthropology at Harvard Medical School and Founding Director of Partners in Health, draws on over twenty years of international medical experience in Haiti, Peru, and Russia to illustrate the link between poverty and health. He exposes the structural elements of politics and economics that contribute to powerlessness and illness among the general population in underdeveloped countries.

***Ethical Issues in Maternal-Fetal Medicine.* By Donna L. Dickenson. London: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pp. 366.**

This book provides a revealing inspection of the many ethical and social problems linked to maternal-fetal medicine. Experts from reproductive medicine, medical ethics, and law explore topics such as: the balance of power in the doctor-patient relationship; the justifiable limits of paternalism and autonomy; the impact of new technologies and new diseases; and disability and enhancement. A focal theme is uniting analytic philosophy with actual practice.

***Manual for Research Ethics Committees.* By Sue Eckstein. London: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. 624.**

The sixth edition of the Manual for Research Ethics Committees incorporates the key legal and ethical guidelines on major topics in bioethics. Written by leading academicians, practitioners, pharmaceutical industry associations, and professional bodies, the manual presents chapters covering key issues from participation in clinical trials to cloning.

***Self-Trust and Reproductive Autonomy.* By Carolyn McLeod. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002. Pp. 215.**

A woman's ability to trust herself in making decisions regarding her reproductive health can be affected by new technology, cultural authority of physicians, and patient-physician relationship. Catherine McLeod brings new insight on ways that a woman's self-trust in reproductive health care can be undermined. The book takes a feminist approach in looking at philosophical moral psychology to reproductive and health care ethics. McLeod promotes patient autonomy and provides recommendations to providers on increasing women's self-trust on reproductive health issues.