

See how they grow-monitoring child growth for appropriate health care in developing countries.

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See how they grow-monitoring child growth for appropriate health care in developing countries.

Author(s) : [MORLEY, D.](#) ; [WOODLAND, M.](#)

Book : [See how they grow-monitoring child growth for appropriate health care in developing countries.](#) 1979 pp.x + 265 pp.

Abstract : Readers who have benefited from the stimulating contact with D. Morley and his associates at the Department of Tropical Child Health in London will find this a distillate of their ideas and teaching. The essence of the book is an exposition of consecutive weight measurements, graphically displayed on a growth chart.

application by lowly trained auxiliaries and part-time workers in rural child health with this, to make rather a mixed cocktail at times, are a number of other topics less related to growth and nutrition, e.g. modern ideas on oral rehydration. The Introduction expounds a philosophy of child health care and highlights the growth chart as a cheap and effective tool in primary care. There is a plea for community involvement and an attack on teaching in "disease palaces". The design and use of the growth chart is described with an explanation of centiles [a good deal of the text about immunization seems irrelevant at this point]. A straightforward and very useful chapter on *Weighing children* is followed by a convincing justification for home records and a plea for home visiting. The next section presents case studies of growth curves in children with malnutrition and various infections, together with a lesson in "relevant (nutrition) teaching". Also rather tenuously connected with the subject of monitoring growth is a chapter on *Breast feeding and birth interval*, and its implications for family spacing. Reasons for "special care" and the identification of children at risk are considered.

Those who have used these growth charts are painfully aware of the mistakes made by insufficiently trained staff. An important chapter deals with practical training methods. Finally there are some interesting applications of the charts in community surveys.

The last part of the book seems to provide an emphasis on community involvement which was lacking in Professor Morley's earlier work *Paediatric priorities in the developing world* [*Trop. Dis. Bull.*, 1974, 71, abstr. 1669]. There is a most stimulating presentation of the experience of rural missionaries in the Philippines. The role of part-time workers is then discussed as an alternative to doctoring by medical graduates, with a rather idealistic table suggesting that original sin may be the monopoly of the doctor. The book ends with a chapter on the fundamental importance of a secure, loving and stimulating home for the intellectual, emotional and social development of the child. An outline of developmental assessment is given.

The bibliography of 153 references is a valuable source for further study, and includes anthropometric tables and suggestions for in-service training in the Appendix. This book is more wide ranging than its title suggests. Although the growth chart and physical development is the foundation garment, there are many more items on the peg, including (dare I say it?) a few recognizable hobby horses! (and why not?) The dust cover suggests that many readers will speak English as a second language, but that case one questions the wisdom of such complicated sections as the discussion of centiles (p. 30), the figure 6.11B on energy requirements and in particular the table on p. 205, captioned, "Perhaps it will be some consolation to the doctors to know that they are not the only ones to have difficulty in communication. Lord Justice Scrutton in *Wainman v. Lubiano* (1920), 'It is very difficult sometimes to be sure that you have put yourself into

thoroughly impartial position between two disputants, one of your class and your class.' "

One admires the enthusiasm and idealism, especially of the later chapters on involvement and part-time health workers. Perhaps some more hard-bitten could be forgiven if they raise a slightly sceptical eyebrow, and ask for more *evidence* that the approach has really worked on a wide scale, and in "ordinary" national child health programmes which do not have the benefit of supervision and inspiration by motivated and unselfish enthusiasts. Perhaps this has yet to be tried?

The Foreword mentions the need for adapting health technology in "the struggle for health freedom". In many ways this book fulfils the expectation of a Liberating approach to child health and the authors are to be congratulated on producing a stimulating contribution to Macmillan's new series of tropical community health manuals. I recommend it for all who are responsible for planning and teaching in child health overseas. *W. M. U. Moffat.*

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