

## BOOKS REVIEWED

Persons willing to review books of interest to forensic psychiatrists are actively solicited by the *Bulletin*. The Book Review Editor receives review copies of texts on a wide variety of subjects. Persons wishing to write a review (in return for which one may keep the book), should write William H. Reid, MD, Nebraska Psychiatric Institute, 602 South 45th Street, Omaha, NE 68106, or call 402-559-5011 for information on review guidelines and availability of titles.

**VULNERABILITIES TO DELINQUENCY.** Edited by Dorothy Otnow Lewis. New York: Spectrum Publications, 1981.

Reviewed by Karen Authier, MSW

Recently a fund-raising appeal for a boys' ranch caught my attention with the proclamation of the founder, Cal Farley: "Jesse James was a good baby." The puzzle of explaining the change from human infant to violent youth offender has challenged theorists in many fields; the simplistic answers of the past — "bad genes," "bad family," "poverty," "sick mind," and so on — have not provided effective direction for prevention, assessment, or intervention with delinquent youth.

Dorothy Otnow Lewis, editor of *Vulnerabilities to Delinquency*, succeeds in bringing together a collection of chapters that probe the complex biopsychosocial factors that may place an individual child at increased risk for antisocial behavior. Lewis, in addition to serving as editor, is also an author of ten of the sixteen chapters. In those chapters Lewis and her coauthors draw heavily on the results of research, studying juveniles incarcerated in a state correctional facility in Connecticut.

While the examination and reexamination of the data regarding that population are somewhat repetitive, the focus of the interpretation shifts, and the results are intriguing and not redundant. For the most part, scientific findings are presented and explained clearly, particularly in Lewis's chapters, and could be read easily and used by professionals from various disciplines with an interest in delinquency. For instance, in a chapter on neurochemical basis of hyperactivity and aggression, B.J. Sahabian takes the time to explain the rationale for the use of animal models to investigate aggression. While most scientists accept the importance of animal research, readers with less scientific background may be grateful for the explanation.

The book is important reading not only for mental health professionals but also for professionals working in corrections, criminal justice, and child welfare. Chapters focusing on the relationship of delinquency to hyperactivity, reading disabilities, seizure disorders and other neurological disorders, neurochemical

changes, psychoendocrine factors, nutrition, family history, and social factors provide a collection of well-organized building blocks toward greater understanding of the complex problem of delinquency. Contributors to the volume assist and challenge the reader to sort and use the findings presented as critical underpinnings for a yet-to-be-completed theory of causation and treatment of delinquency.

Lewis acknowledges the pessimistic viewpoint regarding treatment of antisocial individuals but makes clear her own opinion: she does not regard her young study population as untreatable. Rather she finds them frequently misdiagnosed, with symptoms of seizure disorders or psychosis often overlooked or dismissed as culturally determined. She views the delinquent population as neglected and undertreated, but her observations are those of a caring scholar; they lack the emotional fervor of authors such as Kenneth Wooden. The book brings into question the frequently made distinction between the criminal (fit only for incarceration) and the patient (deserving of psychiatric care). This research finds few differences between youths sentenced via the correctional and psychiatric routes. The tendency to direct black youth into the correctional system rather than into psychiatric treatment is thoughtfully discussed.

The relationship between delinquency and child abuse is addressed in several chapters, particularly Shamok and Lewis's chapter, *Medical Histories of Delinquent Children*. That chapter not only points out the importance of the medical history in the development of the delinquent but also makes recommendations for emergency room staff that are consistent with the recommendations of child abuse experts. In a final chapter on treatment implications, Lewis makes a summarizing plea for recognition "that antisocial behavior manifested by children and adults is frequently the final common pathway of the interaction between environmental factors and a variety of different, potentially treatable neuropsychological vulnerabilities." □

**CARLA GOES TO COURT.** By Jo Beaudy and Lynne Ketchum. New York: Human Sciences Press, 1983

Reviewed by Karen Authier, MSW, ACSW

*Carla Goes to Court* is a book with a specific purpose: preparation of children for participation as witnesses in the criminal justice system. It provides an account of a girl, Carla, who witnessed a burglary, and follows her from the witnessing of the criminal act through reporting of the crime, her identification of the suspect, the preliminary hearing, and the jury trial. The book is written for children at approximately fourth through sixth-grade reading levels. Abundant, large photographs by Jack Hamilton provide pictorial reference points for the young reader and greatly enhance the book. Legal terms are italicized and explained simply in the context of the story. The use of a woman as judge provides a nonsexist frame