

BOOKS AND REVIEWS

condemned and prohibited by international agreements, in particular the Geneva Protocol of 1925, and, more recently, in resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The Social Sciences in Medical Education, *WHO Chronicle*, Geneva, No. 10, 1970.

It is now widely accepted that an understanding of health and disease requires a frame of reference that includes the psychological, social, and cultural aspects of human behaviour. Within this framework the social sciences can extend the resources of the medical sciences, not only in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disease but also in the organization and planning of health resources.

The growth of epidemiology and the emergence of social psychology as a major specialty have revived interest in the social aspects of health and disease. The increased prevalence of degenerative diseases involves problems of extensive disability and prolonged care in which social and psychological management are often as important as medical supervision.

Another way in which the social sciences are implicated in modern medicine is in their contribution to epidemiology; for example, where there is a known relationship between human behaviour and the etiology of certain diseases. It is desirable to know, for instance, how to persuade people to stop smoking in order to prevent lung cancer, to control their diet to prevent ischaemic heart disease, and to understand the relationship of emotional factors to road accidents. These matters lie outside the normal scope of traditional medical education.

Other aspects of medicine that require the knowledge of social scientists include the economic factors involved in medical care and the ethical problems that arise from such innovations as organ transplantation or the technical ability to keep people alive past the point of their being able to function autonomously.

The changing pattern of diseases in the western world over the past 25 years has increased concern with the problem of how to bring the benefit of modern medical science to all the people of the world, while the developing insights of medicine itself (especially in the field of psychiatry or social medicine) have awakened leaders of medicine to the desirability of collaboration with social scientists. At the same time social scientists have perfected a body of theoretical insights and research methods that make it possible for them to begin to meet these needs.
