SOCIOLOGY FOR PHARMACISTS

Sociology for Pharmacists

An Introduction

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To Sally Ann and Pauline

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Preface

This book is intended to acquaint the reader with some of the basic theories and concepts of medical sociology and their application to aspects of pharmaceutical service delivery. We have written this book in response to the recognition that social science can contribute towards equipping pharmacists for practice in the 1990s and beyond. We have adopted an inter-disciplinary approach to the preparation of this book. The topics covered are by no means exhaustive. Rather we have addressed those issues which we consider collectively, as pharmacist, sociologists, and as health care consumers, to be most important.

In chapter one we introduce the subject of sociology and discuss the developments within pharmacy which have led to calls for subjects such as sociology to be included in the pharmacy undergraduate degree curriculum. In chapter two we examine pharmacists' roles and activities in the light of the Nuffield Report on Pharmacy. We also examine the implications of that report and of government proposals on health policy, for the future practice of pharmacy. Sociological perspectives on the experience of illness, and illness behaviour are explored in chapters three and four, and we note that the presence of symptom(s) alone may not result in an individual seeking help or treatment from a health professional. Chapters five and six consider the ways in which health status, and the experience of illness are influenced by such factors as social class, gender and ethnicity. The potentially contentious issue of whether pharmacy, when examined from a sociological perspective, can or can not be considered a full profession is covered in chapter seven. In chapters eight and nine we consider the issues of health education and the pharmacist's role in health promotion. Chapter ten is devoted to a brief introduction to some methodological issues in social research, and incorporates some guidance as to how these issues may be applied to research in the social aspects of pharmacy.

As such we hope this book will be used by students, academic pharmacists and practising pharmacists alike. Moreover, we hope it will stimulate the development of sociologically informed research in social aspects of the practice of pharmacy.