

of otherwise dry methodological-statistical debates. The chapters by Mark Parascandola on tobacco and cancer epidemiology in the mid-twentieth century, by Iain Chalmers on the disputed reasons for the use of randomization in the Medical Research Council's clinical trial of streptomycin in 1948, and by Nicolas Dodier on the politicization of randomized control trials in AIDS research in the final decades of the twentieth century, all weave together discussions about disciplinary advances across statistics and medicine, the role of institutional priorities, biographical trajectories of key protagonists and wider social contexts. Achieving such complexity in such a short space is a tall order, but extremely satisfying when done well, as it is here.

By selecting these three themes I do not seek to criticize the editors' choice of structure; rather, I am trying to suggest that there is much in this volume that can and should be taken up in the future but can barely be covered in a short review such as this. I could expand on even more analytic frameworks, such as Canguilhemian standardization (Christiane Sinding's chapter on diabetes; Weisz's reflections on evidence based medicine); the transformation of qualitative information into biomedical quantitative "platforms" in cancer pathology (Peter Keating and Alberto Cambrosio); or the fascinating chapters on instruments of quantification such as the thermometer (Volker Hess) and physiological measurement (Ilana Löwy). Many of these essays show that such frameworks could profitably be developed for other diseases, medical specialties and devices.

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Pamela Michael and Charles Webster (eds),
Health and society in twentieth-century Wales,
Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2006, pp. xii,
332, illus., £45.00 (hardback 0-7083-1908-4).

*Health and society in twentieth-century
Wales* is a welcome addition to the still

relatively scant academic literature on the history of medicine in Wales, which originates in a conference to mark the new millennium, held on St David's Day 2000 at the University of Wales, Bangor. The first seven chapters—the historical core of the book—address public health, female health, and the professions. In a short review it is impossible to comment on every chapter, but some contributions are especially worthy of note: Steven Thompson's adept statistical survey of unemployment, poverty and women's health, for instance; Kate Fisher's innovative interpretation of the delivery of contraceptive advice; and Paul Weindling's perceptive reading of the Jewish medical refugee crisis before and during the Second World War.

From chapter 8, the volume adopts a more contemporary stance. Pamela Michael profiles Julian Tudor Hart, the legendary GP and researcher from the south Wales valleys, who framed the "inverse care law". He himself then offers a characteristically robust appraisal of *The citadel*, criticizing A J Cronin for not showing "how primary medical care might become both scientific and humane" (p. 212). In asking "What was Wales?", Martin Powell argues for the use of contingency theory—imported from the social sciences—to analyse the medical past in terms of uniform, concurrent, and exceptional policies. And two further chapters examine the administration of the NHS after the establishment of the Ministry of Health and the Welsh Board of Health in 1919, Charles Webster developing a masterful exposition of the tortured transfer of health powers to the Welsh Office up to 1969 and John Wyn Owen reflecting on his decade as Director of the NHS in Wales between 1984 and 1994. Finally, an excellent chapter from Gareth Williams insists that understanding health inequalities "will need not just more and better statistical data and tools, but more interpretative and historical approaches, bringing together the stories of individuals and the histories of social structures in particular areas—cities, towns and communities" (p. 299).

In their preface, the editors explain that mental health and occupational health are

not represented because there was sufficient coverage at the conference to justify separate future volumes on these topics. Whilst this is an encouraging prospect, it does pose problems for the present volume whose rationale to tease out “the interplay between health and society” (p. 10) lacks the specificity of a thematic orientation and hence creates the expectation of a more comprehensive review. But this limitation is to some extent offset by the substantial introductory overview in which Dr Michael attempts the daunting task of surveying the medical history of Wales from the mythical Physicians of Myddfai to recent health promotion campaigns. At its best when engaging with the broader historiography of medicine, this overview addresses occupational health and hospital services as well as the subjects considered in the twelve chapters—though not mental illness, which is surprising given Dr Michael’s expertise in this field and her important study of the North Wales Lunatic Asylum at Denbigh. The notes that underpin her synthesis are a valuable bibliographical tool in their own right, being based on the most thorough trawl of the literature in English and Welsh. Not all these items meet the criteria for modern historical scholarship and some have a tendency towards the hagiographical. However, bringing this material to the attention of a wider audience, within the context of an interesting edited collection, has extended the foundations for a medical history that will be able “to compare Wales with other nations, and to compare different localities in Wales” (p. 234).

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Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700–1920*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. xv, 249, £50.00 (hardback 1-4039-9065-4).

For a subject as potentially scandalous and intriguing as illegitimacy, of relevance to

historians of the family, health, sexuality, and welfare, amongst others, remarkably little has been made of it in recent decades. What we do have has come largely from the historical demography stable, most substantially from Peter Laslett (1980), Andrew Blaikie (1993), and Richard Adair (1996). Following a 2004 conference held in Cambridge, the editors of *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700–1920* attempt to update and rejuvenate the historiography by bringing together those currently working in the field, exploring the subject in a variety of geographical locales and through an imaginative variety of sources and methodological approaches. Contributors subject accepted themes to rigorous investigation, including the survival strategies of unmarried mothers, social attitudes towards bastardy, the paternity of illegitimate children, the mortal penalty of illegitimacy, and the existence of the Laslett-coined “bastardy prone sub-society”.

One of the primary aims of the book is to build on the demographic foundations of earlier work by considering the subjective experience of illegitimacy. Contributors are concerned to understand how illegitimacy was experienced by mothers, fathers, and children; and to examine how such individuals were treated by their communities, authorities, and charitable and welfare organizations. Several chapters directly represent the voices of the parents of illegitimate children—utilizing sources such as pauper letters, magistrates’ court testimony, and Foundling Hospital petitions—to offer a window into the lives of unwed parents. More quantitative methodologies have been used to evaluate how the harsh inequalities of bastardy could affect infant health.

Contributors offer insights into the degree to which illegitimacy was stigmatized and controlled in the past, although with little consensus. Steven King’s study of the treatment of unmarried mothers under the Old Poor Law and Thomas Nutt’s examination of magistrates’ proceedings in paternity cases, suggest that illegitimacy did not necessarily attract significant disapprobation; while the