

BOOK REVIEW

Nursing Tales: Personal Reminiscences of Sexual Health Nursing in the Twentieth Century

Madelaine Ward. Bicester, UK: Bound Biographies, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-1-90517-868-1. Price: £10.00. Pages: 134 (paperback)

Nursing Tales is a history of the role of the nurse in sexual health and the changes that have occurred from the 1920s to the present day. The book, referenced throughout, comprises eight chapters containing reminiscences from nurses working in the field of sexual health.

I really enjoyed reading this book. It is easy to read, and will give any health professional, particularly if working in this area, the context of the

development of sexual health care. Many of the nurses who recounted their experiences for this book are eminent in this field. Their experiences provide insight as to how services have developed throughout the UK.

There are chapters on the early years of the 20th century, post-World War II, the 'swinging Sixties', abortion, the 'temperate Seventies', turbulent times – the Eighties, AIDS and Towards the Millennium. The chapter on AIDS is poignant and immediately reminds readers about how ill-informed we were, and how much progress has been made in HIV management and treatment.

If ever you are having a depressing day trying to circumnavigate bureaucracy, read this book. It will remind you of how far nurses have come, and how much sexual health has changed for the better. It is lovely to have a book that documents this history. The mention of

women waiting for intrauterine device fittings in the reception area with their “knickers off and stockings rolled down” gives the reader an insight into how women were viewed at the time. There are many examples in this book of nurses fighting bureaucracy, and of their successes that at the time were hard fought for but that we perhaps take for granted today.

Reviewed by **Su Everett**

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