

Book Reviews

Evaluation of Clinical Biofeedback

W.J. Ray, J.M. Raczynski, T. Rogers, and W. Kimball
New York: Plenum Press, 1979. ix + 586 pp., \$29.50

Biofeedback and Self-Regulation

Edited by Niels Birbaumer and H.D. Kimmell
New Jersey: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates, 1979. x + 469 pp., \$29.95

Mind/Body Integration: Essential Readings in Biofeedback

Edited by Erik Peper, Sonia Ancoli, and Michele Quinn
New York: Plenum Press, 1979. xx + 586 pp., \$25.00

Reviewed by

Michael Venturino

Department of Psychology

University of Maine

Orono, Maine 04469, U.S.A.

Never before has the laboratory and the clinic been so close as in the field of biofeedback. Born in the laboratory during the Zeitgeist of expanding consciousness, the findings and principles of biofeedback were rapidly applied to clinical settings. The attractive notion that one could exert control over "involuntary" bodily functioning intrigued the scientific community and gained enthusiastic acceptance among clinicians. In effect, the research laboratory had passed another milestone, and in the process given its counterpart, the applied psychologist, a clinical tool with which to "cure all ills." The bandwagon had started: biofeedback was studied intensely, and was also popularized.

Preliminary findings are all too often taken as fact before proven as fact, and biofeedback was no exception. Researchers experienced difficulty in replicating original work, throwing doubts on one's ability to control autonomic bodily processes. Yet in the clinic, biofeedback seemed to have met with moderate success. As a result laboratory research focused on each of the many variables involved in biofeedback. Important questions arose: what response is being reinforced, and what is learned in biofeedback training? Is awareness of the to-be-controlled response necessary? If so, can subjects and patients accurately