

# Introduction

GEORGE M. BRIGHT

*Division of Adolescent Medicine  
Medical College of Virginia,  
Richmond 23219*

“No longer children and not yet adults.” Adolescents make up one of the most difficult but rewarding areas of the practice and art of medicine. This age group challenges the physician to understand and deal with a multiplicity of problems such as drug abuse, scholastic problems, venereal disease, pregnancy and a variety of other adolescent medical problems. Adolescents are fun; they are full of energy and feel sure of themselves.

The adolescent development is characterized by rapid changes in physiological and psychological development. In today's society their quest for independence and metaphysical experiences has created unique problems for the physicians to solve. These problems are continuing to be neglected by far too many people. The key to working with the many faceted problems presented to your office lies in establishing confidence, friendship and loyalty with the individual. Once such a relationship is established, the adolescent will want to continue this association until he is “too old” for you to offer care.

This issue offers you some sound sympathetic guidelines for dealing with a variety of problems commonly presented in offices and hospitals throughout the country. The basic philosophy of adolescent medicine is comprehensive care—promoting physical, mental, social and moral health for all of your adolescent patients.