

## The Book Report

# 'Heretic' doctor says other medics mistreat women

**MALE PRACTICE, How Doctors Manipulate Women by Dr. Robert S. Mendelsohn; Contemporary Books; \$10.95.**

Scary! It's the word which best describes the latest book by the physician whose "Confessions of a Medical Heretic" has received widespread attention — much of it angry reaction from fellow practitioners.

Mendelsohn, familiar because of his appearances on television, is an advocate of what he believes is good-sense medicine.

He is rattling the medical establishment's cage again because he believes that there are too many males practicing medicine with too little regard for their female patients.

In chapters titled after the reassuring phrases any patient is familiar with, Mendelsohn lays out an angering mass of data to back his contentions that women are more likely to be abused medically than men patients.

He says women are likely to be over-drugged, over-charged and over-cut (surgically) because of the practice of "Modern Medicine" by males. He points out that it once was common for women diagnosed as "anxious" to get a prescription for Valium. One of the side effects of Valium, Mendelsohn says, is anxiety.

But that is mild beside his

complaints about the practice of obstetrics and gynecology.

In little more than a decade, Mendelsohn says, the number of Caesarian-section deliveries of babies has increased from one in 20 births to one in six. That increase has occurred despite medical evidence linking some kinds of post-natal afflictions with C-section deliveries. And there are post-surgical dangers to the mother, according to Mendelsohn, including hemorrhage and infection in one of three mothers and a maternal death rate six times higher than for vaginal deliveries.

But most damning, perhaps, are two studies which Mendelsohn says indicate that the so-called emergency Caesarian-sections are performed far more frequently during the daylight and early evening hours than at other times — in other words, scheduled and performed more for the convenience of the doctor rather than the convenience and well-being of mother and child.

Just recently, Mendelsohn reports, the thinking was revised about births after a C-section delivery. Now vaginal delivery is rated as safe or safer than another Caesarian-section delivery, Mendelsohn says.

The reader only hopes more doctors and patients will ask some of the questions suggested by Mendelsohn's book.

— Larry Larson