

claims concerning the benefit of physical methods of treatment, have proved notoriously unreliable when they have been subjected to comparative trials by 'neutral' observers, recently. Therefore, it is vital to provide the statistical evidence for the benefits to be expected in the various conditions which are described.

Having read the book, however, I felt sufficiently intrigued by Mr. Grieves' methods to wish that I could visit and observe his methods in a clinical setting. To provoke such an interest is, presumably what such a book sets out to achieve.

It is well produced in paperback, it has a useful bibliography and list of suggested further reading, but it does not contain an index.

In summary, it could be the basis of a much needed interchange of views between physiotherapists, osteopaths and chiropractors. Certainly it would be a useful asset to most libraries in hospital physiotherapy department.

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Multiple Choice Questions in Biochemistry, H. Hassall, A.J. Turner and E.J. Wood. Pp. vi + 250, illustrated. Pitman, London, 1985. £5.95.

This small book aims at encouraging students to learn about biochemistry, or have their learning reinforced, by asking questions. It is as if the reader is attending tutorials in which the authors ask questions, correct the answers and provide explanations in a completely standard form.

The 200 questions presented by the authors are either in the form of 5-part completion statements or 5-choice answer questions with one or more alternatives correct. They cover a wide range of biochemical topics in the fields relevant to medical and dental studies and the explanations provided are mostly very clear and concise. It would be stretching things a little to state that the book contains 'everything a medical undergraduate needs to know about biochemistry' but there is a generous sample of what a student's knowledge should be. Certainly a student knowing the correct answer and explanation for the majority of questions should have little to fear from an examination in this subject.

The book is divided into two parts. First there are 10 sets of 20 questions, each set covering a variety of topics and arranged so that questions in successive sets are progressively harder. The second part comprises explanations arranged in topics, cross-referenced so that it is easy to find the relevant explanation for each question. Printing each question twice to achieve this has meant an increase by a third in the size of the book. It seems questionable whether much advantage has been gained. By the time students come to use the book, they are unlikely to gain much by having questions grouped in terms of difficult and presented questions in sets each covering a variety of topics may simulate examination conditions but probably does not much enhance the value of this book as a self-assessment/revision aid.

While aimed at undergraduates, there is no doubt that the subject matter of the book is also relevant to postgraduates studying basic medical science for higher qualifications.

Whether the book helps those who seek to create questions, as the authors suggest in the preface, is another matter.

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Obstetric Analgesia and Anaesthesia, Second edition, J. Selwyn Crawford. Current Reviews in Obstetrics and Gynaecology series. Pp. 169. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1984. £9.00.

The fact that the first edition of this excellent monograph sold out and required the production of a second only eighteen months after its initial publication is a significant tribute to its importance in this field.

Dr Selwyn Crawford has for many years been the leading proponent of the art and science of analgesia and anaesthesia in obstetric practice in this country and, I suspect, the world. He is a zealot, and as such excites opposition particularly from the proponents of 'natural childbirth'.

He has never believed that acceptance of pain should be held to represent some sort of maternal triumph over adversity. Indeed he points out that it can harm both mother and child.

Whilst few, if any, departments in which I have worked have achieved the high standards that he lays down, this does not mean that he is wrong or that we should not continue to strive to achieve them. Lack of resources, both in money and manpower, are often used as an excuse for failure, particularly in communication with the patient and gaining their co-operation.

Few subjects excite more mumbo-jumbo than this one, and for those who sometimes feel slightly apologetic at the use of high technology medicine this book should serve not only as a bible but help to give that technology a human face.

I cannot commend it too highly to established consultant and student alike.

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The Parents' A to Z: a Handbook for Children's Health, Growth and Happiness, Penelope Leach. Pp. 736. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1985. \$6.95, \$16.95 (Australia), \$19.95 (New Zealand), \$14.95 (Canada).

In the days of the extended family the giving of advice on bringing up children was left to the elders in the community – usually grandmothers and aunts. Nowadays young mothers, all too frequently, have no-one to turn to except their Health Visitor, GP or clinic. The only alternatives are an article in one of the women's magazines or a radio phone-in.

The trouble with the professionals is that they are thought



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