and terminal illness. It is clear that the liaison psychiatrist's responsibilities are considered to extend beyond the confines of treating mental illness and the author provides a long list of tasks which should be undertaken. These include educating and supporting staff in coping with chronic disease, setting up groups for the treatment of patients with illnesses such as bronchial asthma, mediating within the therapeutic team, managing abnormal illness behaviour and applying techniques such as hypnotherapy and biofeedback. Many will find this a daunting list and the author admits that the liaison psychiatrist depends heavily on the support of other professionals. A multidisciplinary support is emphasized throughout the book but few departments will be able to provide the full range of facilities described here.

Dr Gomez then describes in detail the special problems encountered in relation to particular medical specialities, including neurology, oncology, nephrology and obstetrics and gynaecology. Each chapter is well referenced and remarkably up to date. This reflects well not only on the author but also on the publishers who have clearly done their work efficiently.

The book is essentially an introductory text but none the worse for that. Its focus is strictly clinical and there are several illustrative case histories. It can be recommended to trainee psychiatrists, nurses and junior medical staff as a practical guide, and hospital libraries should be persuaded to purchase it.

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Management of Advanced Melanoma, edited by Larry Nathanson. Contemporary Issues in Clinical Oncology. Vol. 6. Pp. xiv + 272, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, New York, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, 1986. £32.00.

The initial reaction on reading the title of this book is that it must have been written by masochists for masochists! There can be few diseases less responsive to therapy than advanced melanoma. However, this multi-author volume is surprisingly readable, optimistic and informative.

As a result of the difficulties in treating advanced melanoma the contents are indeed a review of modern developments in oncology. Thus useful reviews on cytotoxic drugs are complemented by a comprehensive review of high dosage chemotherapy with autologous bone marrow transplantation, biological response modifiers such as interferons and the uses of monoclonal antibodies and retinoids. Chemosensitivity is sensibly assessed in two chapters reviewing various techniques.

There are also very good reviews on the role of surgical techniques as well as radiotherapy and hyperthermia. The relative lack of success of many techniques in improving survival does tend to be depressing! However, just when interest flags novel subjects such as uveal melanoma, vitiligo and antipigmentary compounds are introduced. To round it all off is a review of recent views on the molecular genetics of the disease.

The book provides a good up-to-date review of a wide-ranging look at the subject. The editor is to be congratulated

on his choice of subject matter for the individual chapters as well as of his authors. The bibliographies are as up to date as might be expected with publication delay on books and from a useful reference source. I can strongly recommend it as a valuable addition to a departmental library.

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Manual of Medical Therapeutics, 25th edition. Washington University Department of Medicine; edited by Matthew J. Orland and Robert J. Saltman. Little, Brown Spiral Manual. Pp. xii + 500. Little Brown, Boston, Toronto, 1986. £9.95 (spiral binding).

There is a large amount of useful information packed into this book which is small enough to fit into a white coat pocket and costs just under £10. The first edition produced in 1943–44 was intended to provide guide lines in medical therapy for fourth year medical students. Over the last 43–44 years, it has gone through 25 editions and would now provide useful information for medical staff of any level working in hospital. Unfortunately they would have to be medical staff working in the United States of America or they would have to be sufficiently well informed to separate out that which is generally applicable and that which is for the American market. This is unfortunate since the authors have a great deal that is helpful to say about a wide range of medical problems such as managing cardiac arrhythmias, investigating pleural effusions or choosing antibiotics and treating infections.

The section on asthma exemplifies the problems for the non-American reader. The principles laid down on how to evaluate and investigate the patient are helpful. However some of the drugs are not available and others like subcutaneous epinephrine (adrenaline) have almost been relegated to the history book. Furthermore, I am not sure how often obtundation is used as an indication for mechanical ventilation.

For the reasons indicated this book could not be recommended for the student or the junior doctor who just wants one book to cover his or her needs in relation to treating medical patients in hospital. However if it were available in a postgraduate centre, the reader who is clear that it is intended for his or her counterpart in the USA might learn a lot from referring to it to assist with the management of a particular problem. The index is excellent.

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