

students, postgraduates working for higher examinations, and consultant physicians faced with perplexing medical problems in diagnosis.

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**Oxford Handbook of Clinical Specialties**, J.A.B. Collier and J.M. Longmore. Pp. ix+787. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Tokyo, 1987. £9.95.

This handbook is written primarily for medical students and junior doctors, and follows the Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine. It is a pocket-book compendium of the major clinical specialties, including general practice, with useful definitions and background information. Outlines of management and ways of handling potentially difficult social situations are also discussed (e.g. how to avoid offending Eastern manners).

The book follows a page-a-subject format, and the authors admit that, because of this, the balance of topics may strike the reader as odd in places. There are few illustrations. Some of the three hundred or so blank pages for personal annotation could perhaps have contained diagrams applicable to the text.

It is difficult to find an appropriate niche for this book. It cannot replace the larger standard texts on the individual specialties, nor would it slip easily into the white-coat pocket, together with stethoscope, diary, X-ray forms and all the other necessary paraphernalia of the beleaguered house officer. Although small relative to the amount of information it contains, it is quite bulky, and does not fulfil one of the most important criteria for a pocket book – sturdiness. Several pages of the review copy fell out after a minimum of handling. Nevertheless, it may be useful and informative as a mini-reference book and for those revising for clinical examinations.

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**Physical Activity and Aging**. 2nd Edition, by Roy J. Shephard. Pp. viii+354. Croom Helm, London, Sydney, 1987. £35.

The first edition of Roy Shephard's book has been a marvellous source of reference, and this new edition, nine years on, is most welcome. It has grown into a big book of 354 pages, 209 of which are now devoted to references. It is really two books for the price of one. One half is about ageing and the other half about activity. Most will wish to buy the book for the four chapters on activity patterns and nutrition, training, ageing in athletes, and exercise in disease. A vast literature is most competently reviewed in these chapters, and there is a nice mixture of the theoretical and the practical. There is, for example, very good advice, research based, on just how much exercise to recommend in patients with ischaemic heart

diseases, peripheral vascular disease and chronic chest disease. The four chapters devoted to ageing are quite a bonus. They cover the ground of ageing of the cell, changes of form and function and demographic trends on which text books abound; but Roy Shephard writes about them with a freshness and a richness of illustration which are very appealing. With a mixture of hard fact, clear view and sound sense this book will be hard to beat.

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**Primary Eye Care in Developing Nations**, by Larry Schwab. Pp. x+203, illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Tokyo, 1987. £2.50.

Ophthalmology in developed countries has become a highly sophisticated technological specialty. It is very refreshing, therefore, to come across a book which concentrates on simple measures to prevent and relieve blindness, two-thirds of which occurs in the developing countries of the world.

This slim volume is aimed at medical assistants, clinical officers, nurses and general physicians who work in ophthalmology and certainly succeeds in de-mystifying ophthalmology because of its simple text and ease of reference. The main blinding conditions of the developing countries are covered well and these chapters are complemented by very sensible advice on appropriate technology in developing countries and the scope of public health ophthalmology at a simple level. The self-manufacture of disposable items and lists of essential drugs and instruments are well thought out and clearly presented.

The book as a whole is well laid out in terms of printing, line drawings and illustrations although some coloured photographs would have enhanced the text to a greater degree than the present black and white photographs. On the other hand, the book is extraordinarily cheap as a result of subsidies from outside bodies and colour photography would have inevitably increased that price which is commendably low.

It would be no bad thing if this book were read by ophthalmologists in the developed countries of the world to bring them down to earth.

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**Progress in Child Health**, Vol. 3, edited by J.A. Macfarlane. Pp. 237. Churchill Livingstone, London, Edinburgh, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £20.

The recent report from the National Children's Bureau 'Investing in the Future' viewed the development of child health services over the past 10 years with deep



## Oxford Handbook of Clinical Specialties

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