

# Postgraduate Medical Journal

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*Postgraduate Medical Journal* publishes original papers on subjects of current clinical importance and welcomes review articles with extensive, up-to-date bibliographies as guides to further reading. Several symposia are published each year, each devoted to a single subject and written by specialists in different disciplines. Most issues include authoritative Current Surveys of clinical problems, and well documented Reports of cases of particular interest, and Book Reviews.

A 'Notice to Contributors' is published on the inside back cover of this issue. The Editor reserves the right to make changes which may clarify or condense papers where this is considered desirable.

The Journal is covered by *Current Contents* and *Biological Abstracts*.

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## Books received

- Alder Hey Book of Children's Doses.* Third edition. Pp. 39. Paper cover. Liverpool Area Health Authority (Teaching) 1979. Obtainable from Pharmacy Office, Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Eaton Road, Liverpool L12 2AP. 40p (postage included) (Europe, 50p. Overseas 60p).
- Atlas of the Newborn.* By NEIL O'DOHERTY. Pp. 412, illustrated. MTP Press, Lancaster, 1979. £14.95.
- A Colour Atlas of Liver Disease.* By SHEILA SHERLOCK and JOHN A. SUMMERFIELD. Pp. 272, illustrated. Wolfe Medical Publications, London, 1979. £18.00.
- Dermatology in Internal Medicine.* By SAM SHUSTER. Pp. 290. Oxford Medical Publications. Oxford University Press. Oxford, New York and Toronto, 1978. Paperback. £5.95.
- Medical Manpower in Britain.* JAMES PARKHOUSE. Pp. 144. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, New York, 1979. Paperback. £3.00.

*Practical Diagnosis. Renal Disease.* By MICHAEL A. KIRSCHENBAUM. Pp. xi+253, illustrated. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, Mass., U.S.A., 1978. Price not given.

*A Short Textbook of Haematology.* By R. B. THOMPSON. Fifth Edition. Pp. viii+465, illustrated. Paperback. Pitman Medical, London, 1979. £8.95.

*Today's Treatment.* Vol. 3. Articles Published in the *British Medical Journal*. Pp. xi+318, illustrated. British Medical Association, London. £5.50.

*Treatment. A Handbook of Drug Therapy.* Edited by O. L. WADE, L. BEELEY, V. W. M. DRURY and P. A. ALESBURY. Instalment 1. Kluwer Publishing, Brentford, Middlesex. 1979. First instalment, £6.50 with 2 binders at £1.80 each. Updating Service, annual subscription c. £7.00.

## Book reviews

### Current Surgical Practice.

Vol. 2. Edited on behalf of the Royal College of Surgeons of England by John Hadfield and Michael Hobsley with a foreword by Reginald Murley. Pp. xii+378, illustrated, soft cover. Edward Arnold, 1978. £11.00.

This is the second volume in what is presumably planned as a series on surgical topics, either in new fields or those in which recent experience has led to a new appraisal of old problems. Each chapter is based on a lecture given in a course of post-graduate surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons of England. The volume therefore in no way constitutes any sort of complete survey of surgical practice. However, each subject has been chosen as one with which the trainee in surgery is bound to make himself familiar and he would certainly be unwise to present himself for a higher surgical examination without having a considered opinion to offer about any one of them. It is true that each chapter is by a single author, and to some extent must be regarded as offering a personal view. It would be a mistake for the examination candidate to regard this as a holy book to be quoted, and the reviewer can see possible irritation being engendered in the usually placid bosoms of examiners if their own views are opposed not by reasoned argument and experience but by reference to Hadfield and Hobsley. With this gentle warning the reviewer would go on to recommend the volume to every candidate for the final fellowship. He is certain to be quizzed fairly thoroughly on several of these topics before he has got through all the parts of that examination. It is traditionally a test of practical management, so this advice by no means implies that the contributions are theoretical or academic. On the contrary, they are all rooted in practice and this volume comprises a valuable refresher course to the practising surgeon and indeed to the examiner. The observations on high velocity missile injuries by Owen-Smith will be read with interest by all surgeons, most of whom have not had recent experience of these wounds. The presentation of fluid balance problems in surgery is a rather thankless task, liable to lose the reader in a fog of theory which in no way helps him with the day-to-day management of his cases.

Johnston's chapter on biochemical problems in surgery avoids this trap and briefly sets out the underlying metabolic problems commonly seen in general surgery. Open prostatectomy is an operation in which vast experience has still

not thrown up a technique that can give consistently trouble-free results. Gibbon discusses the practical details in a clear and helpful manner in his chapter devoted to the operation. Shields, on portal hypertension and bleeding oesophageal varices, will bring the reader up to date with the management of this condition and the operative procedures that are applicable to it. These few topics have been selected to give the purchaser an idea of what he will find. If a criticism is to be made, it would be rather to regret that time and space inevitably prevents any of these monographs from being exhaustive. It may be thought a rather naïve warning, nevertheless the prospective Fellowship candidate cannot be assured that he will not be asked a question even on one of the selected topics, which is not answered in these pages. Excepting this reservation, the book is one that is warmly recommended to the postgraduate surgical student.

### Medical Care of the Elderly.

By M. R. P. HALL, W. J. MACLENNAN and M. D. W. LYE. Pp. viii+159, soft cover, illustrated. HM + M Publishers, Aylesbury, Bucks. 1978. £4.50.

The authors have set the scene by describing 7 typical geriatric problems, and commenting on the examination, differential diagnosis, and management of these cases. Following this are a series of short chapters of about 10 pages each. These include the changing pattern of the elderly population, social problems of the elderly, and also medical problems, such as brain failure, cardiovascular system and neurology of old age.

As a low powered and easily readable little book for medical students, junior doctors and paramedical workers, this is excellent.

### Paediatrics (2nd edn)

By JOHN APLEY. Concise Medical Textbooks. Pp. x+453, soft cover, illustrated. Baillière Tindall, London, 1979. £4.95.

In these days of MCQs, structured questions and statistical analysis of a candidate's ability, it is refreshing to find a book such as this, written in a personal style with the compassionate attitude for which the author is well known. The first edition of this book was successful and it is a little surprising that it has taken 6 years to produce the second. In

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