Books received


Book reviews

Aspects of Alcohol and Drug Dependence
This book is yet another compilation of the offerings at a multidisciplinary conference. This was the Fourth International Conference on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, held in Liverpool. No doubt the participants enjoyed themselves and learned much from each other but that hardly justifies the subsequent publication of the papers presented. The volume does contain a few important contributions with real findings to publicize but these contributions are easily available elsewhere. Examples are Murray's paper on alcoholism in the medical profession and Thorley's follow-up study of heroin addicts. Unfortunately there are also contributions where publication serves no purpose, such as the complex case conferences reported at the end of the book.
In addition to the variable quality of the papers there is a variability of subject matter which does nothing to aid understanding. It ranges from smoking in pregnancy to nurse education, from liver histology to 'personal growth' and the problem drinker. I found the valuable portions far too deeply buried in a welter of irrelevant material.
I cannot see this book being of interest to many except those already deeply involved in drug dependence and most of those will be familiar with much of the content.

Asthma in Children
Asthma should no longer be a cause of chronic ill-health in childhood. Nevertheless, despite advances in our understanding of pulmonary physiology and in approaches to treatment, the aetiology of asthma and its prevention remain elusive. This book provides a multidisciplinary approach to practical clinical assessment and management, with an emphasis on recent advances in knowledge. The contributors include a paediatrician, a GP and allergist, an immunologist, and a clinical pharmacologist. The natural history of the condition is reviewed in the context of separate chapters on physiology and pathology, immunology, and testing of lung function. Exercise-induced asthma is examined separately, and both emergency and long-term management are thoroughly discussed. Specific guidance on treatment regimes is given, each chapter is thoroughly referenced and the index gives ready access to details of the disorder. The basic physiology of pulmonary responses is perhaps over-emphasized, being repeated as each author introduces his aspect of the condition. On the other hand, this intentional arrangement allows each chapter to stand in its own right. The figures are illuminating and in many cases refer to individual clinical problems. The book is presented in a concise format providing a clear and objective account based on the author's depth of experience in the field, rather than a comprehensive review of the disorder. It will be of value to all those practically involved in looking after children with asthma, both in the primary care setting of the community, and in hospital practice.

Clinical Cancer Medicine, Treatment Tactics
Most books produced on the subject of cancer give a systematic account of the disease as it affects the various systems. In this book, specific problems encountered in the management of patients with cancer are discussed. The treatment of mediastinal obstruction, spinal cord compression and hypercalcaemia, and the complications that arise in, for example, the cardiovascular, renal and pulmonary systems are dealt
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