
I was told as a student by one of my illustrious teachers that for those who need it, the M.R.C.P. examination 'is an exam that everyone should take once but only once'. I have no doubt that this is a good maxim to try to live up to. Probably the best way to do this successfully for part I and the written section of part II is to be adept in the types of questions set.

This is a new book which contains questions for both parts of the examination. It should be used in conjunction with a good cardiac textbook. The electrocardiographs, radiographs and the three echocardiographs are quite clearly reproduced, the type face easy on the eye and the book is adequately bound. The questions embrace common and classical topics and the answers are terse and generally dogmatic but this is inevitable in books of this kind and not altogether a bad thing. I must confess that I did not score 100%. Even though I did not agree with all the answers, the questions were generally fair and I enjoyed working through them.

Although there are already several books available for M.R.C.P. candidates, few are devoted to cardiology. I think this is a useful addition and I would recommend it to all those aspiring to the 'Membership'.

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The aware radiologist recognises three areas in which computers are, or will be, important within his department and in relations with his patients and colleagues: 1. Image production and manipulation. (Here already with ultrasound and CT and promising in conventional radiography.) 2. The 'airline' functions of reservations and ticketing for individual examinations. 3. The ultimate of filmless reporting and instant multipoint access within the hospital to images and reports. The initial impression of Computers in Radiology (from the title and the contents page) was very promising and the reviewer had that warm, smug feeling that his search for a volume dealing in depth with the above three topics was over.

The first three chapters deal with the history, 'anatomy and physiology' of the computer. These occupy fifty-three pages and are written in a long-winded and 'Micky Mouse' style. Better and more concise accounts are available elsewhere.

Then comes the meat of the book: four chapters on radiology. The first of these, 'Digital Imaging Processing', is excellent, being a clear and relevant discussion of the way pictures are created from numbers and subsequently improved by computer-based techniques such as smoothing, edge enhancement and re-masking.

The next two chapters on digital radiography and CT are sound, if basic, descriptions of these imaging modalities and their technical limitations. The last of this group of four chapters is yet another explanation of nuclear magnetic resonance imaging and is by no means the best available.

At this stage of the book this reviewer had learned little. This is rather surprising as he is in no sense a computer buff, and must be one of the few radiologists who does not even possess a personal micro! Nonetheless there were still fifty-three pages remaining at the beginning of the last chapter entitled 'The Computerised Radiology Department'. This is really a topic of very great excitement with the following prospects: a filmless X-ray department, the images stored on magnetic discs, readily accessible unlike the traditional film envelope which seems to have legs, if not wings, of its own, the radiologist sitting in front of a bank of TV screens calling up images and making vital decisions like the airport traffic controller; clinicians on the ward or in their out-patients clinics simply dialling up the X-rays and reports on their screens. Sadly, this discussion ended after five pages and the final chapter itself after another three.

With the 'book' finished, what could occupy the
remaining forty-five pages? The index takes up nine
and the glossary fourteen (both useful in any technical
volume) but there is an extraordinary Appendix of
twenty-two pages containing complex mathematical
formulae and concepts. This Appendix has no rele-
vance at all to the book or to the reader.

The overall reaction to this book was one of
disappointment. But at least the reviewer now under-
stands how many of his examiners must have felt over
the years. The book is rather like the average can-
didate's essay: basically inoffensive but containing too
little of substance relative to the question.

Much of this book is 'packing'. It is difficult to
understand why it was written at all. Many radiolog-
ists would, as I, be attracted and excited by the title but
the title is misleading and leads to disappointment. I
cannot recommend the book.

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Gastroenterology Revision. Illustrated Case Histories
and MCQs. Robin A. Bradbear, C. Bryan Campbell
Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New
York, 1984. £7.95.

This clear, concise, pocket-sized book describes 20
gastroenterological case histories presented in step-
wise manner with multiple choice questions interspers-
ded throughout the text. It aims both to examine basic
knowledge of diseases and to encourage the applica-
tion of problem-solving principles in their investiga-
tion and management.

The authors are to be congratulated in including in a
book of this size all the most important aspects of
gastroenterology as major case histories whilst cover-
ing many less common disorders in the discussions
relating to each case. There is an emphasis towards
disease affecting the liver (eight cases) and upper
gastrointestinal tract (six) with less stress upon the
small and large intestine and pancreas. There is little
mention of motility disorders, infective enteritides,
vascular disease of the bowel and that very common
disorder, the irritable bowel syndrome; whilst some
discussion of non-gastroenterological diseases present-
ing with abdominal symptoms might have been
useful. By its very nature this book is didactic rather
than discursive and, inevitably, there arise minor
points of personal disagreement with the views expres-
sed. Nevertheless, the authors always provide rea-
soned explanation and justification for their de-
clusions and selected references are included for further
reading.

Despite these minor reservations, the authors have
produced an excellent revision of basic gastroen-
terology, presented in both an entertaining and
thought-provoking manner. Its format allows this
book to be read either in brief spells as hasty revision,
or at leisure when conscientious study will provide
much important information. Although slightly over-
priced, I would recommend this book to both under-
graduate and postgraduate students. Even consultant
gastroenterologists might find it useful as alternative
teaching material.

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Manual of Pediatric Anesthesia, Second edition, David

This excellent pocket size book more than achieves its
stated aims, which are to discuss important features of
the anatomy and physiology of paediatric patients, to
present the principles of paediatric anaesthetic man-
agement, and to describe techniques of anaesthesia for
specific procedures. Every aspect is concisely, yet
comprehensively described. At the end of each section
is a list of references for additional reading, which
gether with the large number of facts in the book,
must make this one of the most comprehensive sources
of information on paediatric anaesthesia and intensive
care. A large table in appendix I lists 239 syndromes
and disorders with brief notes on the anaesthetic
implications. Other appendices include doses of drugs
used in anaesthesia, and the management of resuscita-
tion and cardiac arrest in infants and children. Prac-
tical and safe advice is given on the management of
anaesthesia for all types of paediatric surgery, with
comprehensive sections on neurosurgery, cardiac sur-
gery, renal failure, and burns and trauma. It is
unfortunate that this edition does not mention the
newer muscle relaxants atracurium and vecuronium,
although there is considerable information on the use
of isoflurane in children. The anaesthetic management
of minor surgical procedures in infants using a mask
and inhalation agents sounds deceptively easy, and
although no doubt safe when taught in the environ-
ment of a major children's hospital, emphasises the
fact that this book is most valuable when used in