

Multiple Choice Questions for the MRCP. 2nd Edition, Pankaj Joshi. Pp. ix + 243. Butterworths, London, Boston, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington, 1990. Paperback £10.95.

Multiple choice questions (MCQ) are now an integral part of an examination system at all levels. The first edition of Pankaj Joshi's book appeared in 1982, reprinted twice, before the current 2nd edition. This in itself reflects its popularity.

The first chapter summarises the format of the Part I MRCP examination. The practical hints in dealing with MCQs and the marking system should be very helpful to those not familiar with MCQs. No less important is a glossary of some of the common terms often used in MCQs such as 'Pathognomic', 'Specific', 'Always', 'Never'. The author rightly advises not to guess at the answers.

The next chapter sets out ten model examination papers and advises the candidate to tackle them under simulated examination conditions. This is followed by well referenced answers. A useful 4th chapter groups commonly set MCQs according to subjects. These also include questions in basic sciences which now comprise up to a third of the total MCQs.

This book is a good introduction to multiple choice questions, and provides an opportunity to practise. It may also help in revision of medicine. The price (£10.95) is well within the means of most candidates. I would have no reservations in recommending this book to my juniors.

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Principles and Practice of Endocrinology and Metabolism. Edited by Kenneth L. Becker. Pp. xxxii + 1912, illustrated. J.B. Lippincott, Philadelphia, Grand Rapids, New York, St Louis, San Francisco, London, Sydney, Tokyo, 1990. \$125.00.

305 authors (mostly North Americans) have contributed to this textbook of clinical endocrinology. Each is an expert in his or her field, and the coverage is reliable, up to date, and comprehensive. The first section surveys general principle, including reviews on biosynthesis and action of hormones at the cellular level, a boon for the busy clinician who has difficulty in keeping up with biotechnology. The bulk of the text considers the endocrine system gland by gland, detailing anatomy, physiology, pathology, and clinical management. There is a large section on the diffuse endocrine system (for example: growth factors, gut hormones), and others on inborn errors of metabolism, and endocrine aspects of malignancy. Diabetes mellitus is covered in detail. Organs such as the kidneys and skin are discussed, both in relation to their intrinsic endocrine functions and to the changes

which occur in response to endocrine disorders elsewhere.

This is an impressive publication, both in size (4.3 kg) and content. For the general physician it provides all the endocrinology that is likely to be needed. For the specialist, the discussion of rare diseases is limited by space, but there are lists to jog the memory, and references to original literature. The overall format, page layout, and typestyles resemble closely those of another (well established) multi-author textbook of endocrinology, but Becker's has the advantage of freshness which accompanies a new project.

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Textbook of Medicine. edited by R.L. Souhami and J. Moxham. Pp. xii + 1198, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1990. £24.95.

A new major text book of medicine is a big event, and this is a big book, over 1,100 pages. It is aimed especially at undergraduates and, as the editors rightly say, it contains all they need, and a lot more that would enlighten many postgraduates too. So profuse, however, is current medical science that even a book of this size can deal only superficially with many topics, and the serious membership candidate will need to supplement this basic diet with monographs on relevant sections from the larger texts.

The chapters follow a conventional system classification, including psychiatry and skin disease, preceded by a batch of chapters, many of them of vivid interest, on general topics, epidemiology, the clinical approach, clinical pharmacology, poisoning, environmental aspects, genetics, immunological disease, nutrition, cancer and ageing.

The book is tightly and skilfully edited. For example, the breadth and depth of basic science in this mainly clinical book is maintained evenly between the chapters, at a level perhaps a bit less sophisticated than one would like but almost certainly as much as most medical students would want.

One special feature is the emphasis on clear and relevant diagrams, graphs, line drawings and other illustrative material which, together with the clear text make the book a pleasure to read.

On the subjects I was competent to judge, I found it interesting, accurate and well organized. On those for which I sought enlightenment, I found it lucid, logical and again, well organised and easy to read.

An excellent book – I hope people buy it, read it and keep it to hand. This is a major addition to the medical library.

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Textbook of Medicine

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