Drug Prescribing in Pregnancy, Beatrice Krauer, Felix Krauer and Frank Hytten. Current Review in Obstetrics and Gynaecology series. Pp. 188, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1984. £9.95.

Despite increasing medical and public concern with regard to the problems of the effects of drugs on the unborn child, there is a paucity of information available for medical practitioners when prescribing for the pregnant patient. This concise and eminently readable book, therefore, fills an important gap in the availability of texts dealing with this subject. The three authors who come from a background of relevant experience in obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics and clinical pharmacology, have put together a very helpful resume of this difficult area. The text is well planned being divided into sections which deal with the general principles of drug prescribing in pregnancy ranging from the possibility of altered pharmacodynamics and the major concerns of teratogenic effects to the general possibilities of disturbed pharmacokinetics in the pregnant patient. This latter section is particularly useful as it deals with the altered physiological processes in pregnancy which influence drug absorption, metabolism, excretion and distribution, including for example an important but easily overlooked problem area, namely, absorption from the epidural space during epidural anaesthesia for labour. The author's discussion of various models of drug kinetics during pregnancy as compared to the normal control, and the sprinkling of mathematical formulae, will not deter the uninitiated and will be of use to those familiar with general pharmacokinetic principles. The third section of the book dealing with specific drugs which may be used in obstetric practice is probably the most useful, as it brings together all of the available literature in this area in an easily readable and retrievable form. The section deals with drugs in various therapeutic categories and gives useful information on dosage and administration, and range of maternal and cord blood plasma concentrations.

Finally the text is exceptionally well referenced with a bibliography containing in excess of 500 citations. My only minor criticism is the absence of a section dealing with drug administration during lactation; possibly this could be added at the time of revision for the next edition. This book will be a useful addition to the shelves of obstetricians, gynaecologists, anaesthetists and clinical pharmacologists, as well as to all medical practitioners who find themselves in a position of prescribing for the pregnant patient.

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Illustrated Guide to Surgical Practice, Joseph Freidrich and Vernon Marshall. Pp. 241, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1984. £9.95.

It is a common and commendable practice for surgical teachers to produce a concise guide for their junior staff covering the fundamental principles on which surgical treatment is based. The present volume comes from the Monash University Department of Surgery in Melbourne and is produced by its surgical chairman and associate professor. It is aimed at clinical students and surgical house staff. Successive chapters deal first with the process of wound repair and wound management, including burns and specific infections. Then follow sections on the principles of surgical procedures, which cover briefly all the principal branches of surgery from closing wounds to organ grafts. Principles of pre-, peri- and post-operative care are then considered and the book ends with examples of some of the common elective and emergency procedures considered under indications, pre-operative preparation, operative steps and post-operative progress as well as considering complications and end results. Such varied procedures as ingrowing toenail, hernia repair, femoro-popliteal bypass, cholecystectomy, gastrectomy and appendicectomy are described. The text is accompanied by copious simple line drawings by Professor Freidrich together with flow charts and tables.

Certainly a great deal of information is contained within this book. Although a more formal text would be needed, this book would certainly add some interest.

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Progress in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Volume 4, edited by John Studd. Pp. 395, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1984. £15.00.

This volume maintains the high standard already set. There are twenty-five chapters, in each of which one or two distinguished, internationally recognised experts discusses a subject currently topical in obstetrics, gynaecology and oncology. There are also interesting contributions on the patient/gynaecologist relationship, and on medico-legal aspects of obstetrics and gynaecology. Each chapter is an adequately referenced