tioned only three and gave one a less than enthusiastic review.

Anyone interested in buying medical books personally or professionally should have access to the 'Medical Textbook Review', a bargain at £3.00. It is a good read and a useful reference book and can be used as a blunt instrument in convincing your medical librarian that *your* favourite title should be available on the shelves.

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Multiple Choice Questions in Geriatric Medicine, K. Gupta. Pp. xiv + 178. Pitman, London, 1985. £5.95.

This small book begins with an introduction from Professor John Anderson giving advice on answering multiple choice questions. It is then followed by over 300 questions in eleven different sections. Each section is followed by the answers together with some discussion of the background to these answers. It is well put together, easy to use and serves the useful purpose of self audit. It raises, however, a question which is fundamental to multiple choice questionnaires and particularly those involving clinical material or (as in this case) more general material about care of the elderly. That is the difficulty that arises when there is no clear cut answer and so debate is possible.

Some examples of debatable answers are as follows (author's answer is in parentheses):

Generally speaking diseases are difficult to prevent in old age (False). The answer says it is false because anaemia, hypothyroidism and osteomalacia are frequently not reported. This is true but a student could be forgiven for taking the opposite view if he indicated that much more common than those diseases specifically mentioned are others (e.g. atheroma/ishaemic heart disease/congestive heart failure/diabetes/chronic obstructive airways disease and Parkinsonism) which are not preventable at the present time by intervention in old age, although some may be affected by intervention at earlier ages.

'Age Concern was started in 1940 (True).' In fact the National Old Peoples' Welfare Committee started in 1940 and Age Concern became its successor under different management in 1970.

'Over 50% of cases of infective endocarditis in the elderly are due to *Strep. faecalis* (the answer indicates this is true because *Strep. viridans* is the most important cause). This is somewhat confusing, to say the least.

'Day hospitals with 15–20 places provide a better quality of care (True).'

'Angina is not often complained of by the elderly (False).'

'Thyrotoxicosis predominantly affects the cardiovascular system in the elderly (True).'

In the main these and other debatable questions are shortcomings of the multiple choice questionnaire system and not of the author's researches. In the present context, however, used as a self audit exercise this little book provides a useful basis. The answers are briefly but reasonably

discussed and if the auditee disagrees with some then hopefully he will be stirred to refer to a textbook.

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Multiple Choice Questions in Psychiatry, James Maguire, Patrick McKeon and Kieran Power. Pp. ii + 140. Pitman, 1985. £5.95.

This small book includes 200 MCQs in its first part, and answers accompanied by short commentaries in the second. The questions are of a type encountered in examination for Membership of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the exercise of trying to answer them and checking the answers afterwards will prove valuable to candidates for this examination. This is the purpose of the book which it is likely will be achieved.

At the same time it is interesting that the wording of psychiatric MCQs requires particular care, and that it is difficult to set psychiatric MCQs to which all the answers would be agreed by representative experts. Royal College of Psychiatrists' questions are not (yet) entirely free of semantic problems or of contentious items and so the questions in this book, which are similar in these respects, will be useful to trainee psychiatrists facing the examination hurdle. The commentaries are commendable.

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Practical Methods in Clinical Immunology Series. Vol. 8. Paraproteins in Disease: Investigation of Plasma Cell Dyscrasia, W. Pruzanski and E.C. Keystone. Pp. xii + 195, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1985. £30.00.

This is yet another review of paraproteins from this Canadian group. The first chapter is devoted to the structure and function of immunoglobulins and is similar to the dry descriptions that can be found in most standard immunology texts. Chapter 2 however, is recommended and reviews a wide variety of disease states associated with paraproteins with in particular a good review of non-neoplastic diseases associated with paraproteinaemia. The discussion on cryoglobulins is very up to date, however I wish more space had been allowed for discussion on amyloidosis.

The remaining chapters are largely devoted to laboratory techniques involved in isolation and characterisation of paraproteins from a wide variety of body fluids and tissues. The final chapter discusses the hydridoma technology for monoclonal antibody production and I regret that they have not gone on to discuss the new techniques of DNA hybridisation which is revealing so much evidence about B cell products such as immunoglobulins.

This book is part of a series of methodology text books in clinical immunology and as such I am sure will be useful to laboratory based workers. Its index could have been expanded to help those people who wish to refer to the book for an individual standard technique rather than having to scan pages looking for the information.

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Practical Geriatric Medicine, A. Norman Exton-Smith and Marc E. Weksler. Pp. viii + 475, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1985. £34.00.

It is 25 years since Professor (then Dr.) Exton-Smith wrote the first textbook of geriatric medicine. At that time there were dire warnings that geriatric medicine was an ephemeral non-discipline and that a textbook on the subject was redundant, but the specialty has burgeoned and textbooks have multiplied. Even the USA, long dormant in spite of the geriatric medicine bugle calls, is awakening.

This textbook reflects the US interest with editors and contributors from both sides of the Atlantic. Much of the writing is about standard subjects and sensible accounts are given; the occasional writer gives the impression that he would rather be writing in a general medical textbook than having to find something that applies to the elderly only. The emphasis is generally good and the chapter on sleep disorders is excellent. Particularly well done are the chapters on topics which are not usual in a general medical book – epidemiology of ageing, resources and rehabilitation. The layout is pleasing but there are numerous spelling mistakes.

This book fills a gap between the smaller texts and the large, expensive ones. As such it is strongly recommended and should find a wide readership.

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Major Problems in Internal Medicine Vol. 24. Sarcoidosis and Other Granulomatous Disorders, D. Geraint James and W. Jones Williams. Pp. xiv + 254, illustrated. W.B. Saunders, Philadelphia, London, Toronto, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Sydney, Tokyo, 1985. £39.50.

This is the 24th volume in a series 'Major Problems in Internal Medicine' in which the editor and most other contributors are North American. In this volume the authors are British, a physician and a pathologist who have studied sarcoidosis and published extensively on this subject over many years.

It starts with a fascinating historical review. This is followed by a classification of sarcoidosis and other gran-

ulomatous disorders and by descriptions of the pathology and of the ways in which sarcoidosis involves different systems. The next 7 chapters give a more detailed account of sarcoidosis of different organs and tissues based on the clinical, radiographic and laboratory findings in 818 patients attending Dr. James's Unit at the Royal Northern Hospital, London, over 30 years up to 1981 and of 3676 patients collected from a world-wide survey who have attended 11 sarcoidosis clinics in 9 different countries.

The book concludes with chapters on the biochemistry, immunology, criteria of disease activity, differential diagnosis, aetiology, treatment and epidemiology.

The authors have succeeded in condensing a wealth of information into a relatively small number of pages by judicious use of clear, succinct English, tables and diagrams. The price is fairly high, being in the same range as some standard text books of respiratory diseases. However, this should not prevent its purchase by hospital and department libraries as it is valuable reference source for general physicians and for specialists in thoracic medicine, ophthalmology, dermatology and many other branches of medicine.

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Scientific Basis of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Third edition, edited by Ronald R. Macdonald. Pp. vii + 520, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1985. £35.00.

The third edition of this popular and successful book has been extensively revised and re-written. It now contains 14 chapters on basic scientific aspects of obstetrics and gynaecology, and new subjects covered in this edition include ovarian function, epidemiology, genetic counselling and ultrasound. All the chapters have been produced by distinguished authors and they are invariably well-written with most achieving their aim of taking the reader through from an understanding of basic science to an appreciation of its clinical application.

The book is reasonably well-illustrated, but understandably such subjects as immunological factors in pregnancy, epidemiology, medical ethics and sexual dysfunction do not readily lend themselves to elaborate visual aids. Each chapter starts with a headlined précis of its contents and ends with a very useful and extensive bibliography.

The book is not a comprehensive work that is suitable on its own for candidates taking the Part I MRCOG examination; indeed this is not its declared purpose. It is, nevertheless, a most useful adjuvant work which is suitable for candidates preparing for both the Part I and Part II MRCOG examinations. The book therefore, is primarily directed to the practising clinician who seeks to improve his or her basic understanding of the scientific aspects of clinical obstetrics and gynaecology and to this end this excellent book fulfils its intention.

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