will no doubt, like myself, find matters to disagree with but this is inevitable given the deliberately didactic style of the book, and no harm.

The first half contains a series of potted histories followed by advice on 'What it might be', 'How to decide?', 'What to do?', 'What choice?' and then a suggested prescription which is subjected to a 'critique'. These illustrate a number of commonly presenting symptoms such as backache, sore throat, menorrhagia etc. These are excellent, but occasional inconsistencies betray different views among the authors. Beclomethasone (Beconase), for instance, is said to have 'all the possible side effects' on page 63 but to have 'no long term steroid side effects' on page 66. In the case of the lady of 76 who has gradual and progressive swelling of feet and ankles for a few weeks the advice of 'bed rest for a few days' might be a quick route to a pulmonary embolus. I would also dispute the statement that 'it is wrong to prescribe anti-infective substances for vaginal discharge without information of the specific pathogens'.

The second half of the book covers topics in 'planned care' such as hypertension, diabetes and asthma. This is not quite so stimulating, partly because it leaves the specific questions of what exactly to prescribe for this patient in these circumstances for broad generalizations about treatment that could be found in many other books. It also extends to descriptions of aetiology and diagnosis and in an attempt to cover too much ground leaves no space for some important problems. Hypothyroidism for instance gets relegated to three lines with no suggested dosages. The discussion on atrial fibrillation does not mention the treatment of intermittent fibrillation which is a frequent and worrying problem in general practice. There is a good summary of contraception but the answer given to the question 'Whom to treat and why?': 'Any woman of childbearing age (about 20 percent of the population) may need contraceptive advice' seems rather sexist.

This volume however is certainly well put together and deserves a place on the library shelves of training practices.

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Recent Advances in Clinical Oncology. No. 2, edited by C.J. Williams and J.M.A. Whitehouse. Pp. xii + 256, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £30.00.

This is the second in a series of recent advances in clinical oncology which covers a very large range of topics. The subjects range from a variety of new developments such as oncogenes, interferon, hyperthermia and neutrons through clinical topics of screening for cancer, treatment of specific malignancies and the associated toxicities, and a variety of investigational techniques.

As is inevitable with such a mixed fare the standard of the various chapters is very variable. Some are really excellent and do provide very up-to-date reviews. Others are rather more pedestrian and give a somewhat tired overview of topics

which perhaps would not be regarded as absolutely current new developments. This does mean that the book is perhaps more of general interest to persons working in the cancer area and indeed those outside the immediate field than those who have more expert knowledge. This is not a bad thing as there is always a need to introduce areas of special interest to which readers can go for further references. This is well achieved by this particular book.

It would be easy to criticize individual chapters on the basis of events overtaking the publication time. Much has happened since the last references that are listed in this book but in most of the chapters this does not matter too much. The editors themselves state 'time is a ruthless judge of scientific progress' in their introduction and I think this does indicate the problem with such books. In spite of these reservations the reviewer can thoroughly recommend this book for all who wish to get an overview of a very wide range of interesting topics.

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Transcultural Psychiatry, edited by John L. Cox. Pp. vii + 337, illustrated. Croom Helm, London, Sydney, Dover, New Hampshire, 1986. £29.50.

A book of this title is not likely to attract avid attention as transcultural psychiatry does not have the most exciting image in mental health circles. It has a reputation of being concerned with esoterically named disorders from all parts of the world that turn out on close examination to be replicas of common mental disorders. The preoccupation with description of culture-bound syndromes has a mild intrinsic interest but not one that normally stimulates the reader.

This book is an exception to the rule and succeeds because it breaks outside the confines of most other texts on cultural aspects of psychiatry. It dares to enter forbidden territories such as the impact of racism and prejudice on mental illness (Dr Aggrey Burke), the dangers of exporting the British concepts of independence, self-sufficiency and personal responsibility to other cultures when describing mental illness (Dr H.B. Murphy), and the importance of politics as a determinant of psychiatric practice (Dr S.P. Sashidharan).

There are also interesting chapters about the particular difficulties experienced by ethnic minorities, overseas students and migrants which go some way towards explaining the curious quirks in the statistics of mental illness that continue to bother epidemiologists. Unfortunately it is easy to ask questions in transcultural psychiatry but much more difficult to obtain definitive answers. Why is it, for example, that the Irish have a much higher incidence of mental illness than the English whether or not they live in Ireland, England or anywhere else on this planet? Why do West Indians find their way into psychiatric hospitals through the intermediary of the police and compulsory orders whereas other ethnic minorities enter through more conventional channels? There are appeals throughout the text for what is described as 'an ethnocentric view' of mental illness, but I doubt that even

from this lofty elevation sufficient knowledge is available to answer these questions.

Despite these difficulties the book covers the field extremely well and although there is sometimes an unnecessary intrusion of sociological jargon most of the authors' contributions are readable and to some extent novel. The book is well worth reading for those who wish to get the feel of transcultural psychiatry as a discipline within the field of mental illness. The authors might have been served better if the book had been printed in larger type and on better quality paper. At a price of £29 this degree of economy was probably unnecessary.

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The Troubled Gut: the Causes and Consequences of Diarrhoea, Bryan Brooke. Pp. 172, illustrated. King Edward's Hospital Fund for London. Distributed by Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986. £7.50.

This book on diarrhoea is primarily for non-medical readers. It is written in three sections. The first describes normal intestinal function, and the mechanisms whereby diarrhoea may develop. The infective diarrhoeas are considered in some detail and ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease in greater detail. Gluten sensitivity, the irritable bowel syndrome, diverticular disease and cancer receive passing mention only.

The second and third sections cover the treatment of ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, and possible aetiological factors. The reader gains much from Professor Brooke's wide experience over many years in the management of these conditions. There is a useful glossary of medical terms used in the text.

The non-medical reader will find much to interest him in this book – not only about the physiology and pathology of the gut, but also glimpses of medical history, haematology, bacteriology and immunology. Patients unfortunate enough to suffer from inflammatory bowel disease, and also their relatives and friends, will be helped in their understanding of the affliction. Doctors too, increasingly criticized for their failure to communicate adequately with their patients, will benefit from reading Professor Brookes' lucid explanations of medical complexities in a simple, conversational style.

I was disappointed that little is said about diet and disease – frequently the topic of questions from patients – and I thought more use could have been made of diagrams. These are minor criticisms of a book which is well worth reading, and should help to achieve the aim stated in the preface, to break the taboo of silence surrounding the subject of diarrhoea. I hope the title proves gripping enough to attract the general reader.

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Books Received

Affective Disorders in the Elderly, edited by Elaine Murphy. Medicine in Old Age Series. Pp. viii + 235, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York. 1986. £28.00.

Anesthesia in Obstetrics: Maternal, Fetal, and Neonatal Aspects. Second edition, George A. Albright, James E. Ferguson, Thomas H. Joyce and David K. Stevenson. Pp. xviii + 622, illustrated. Butterworths, Boston, London, Durban, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington, 1986. £65.00.

Annual Review of Microbiology. Vol. 40, 1986, edited by L. Nicholas Ornston, Albert Balows and Paul Baumann. Pp. xii + 712, illustrated. Annual Reviews, Palo Alto, California, 1986. \$31.00 (USA), \$34.00 (elsewhere). Prices include postage and handling.

British Medical Bulletin. Vol. 42, No. 3, July 1986. **Endoscopic Surgery**, edited by R.A. Miller and J.E.A. Wickham. Pp. 221–339, illustrated. Published by Churchill Livingstone for The British Council, 1986. £16.00.

The Cambridge Diet: a Manual for Practitioners, John Marks and Alan Howard. Pp. viii + 112, illustrated. MTP Press, Lancaster, Boston, The Hague, Dordrecht, 1986. £12.50 (hardback).

Clinics in Haematology. Vol. 15, no. 1, Feb. 1986. **Autologous Bone Marrow Transplantation**, edited by Anthony H. Goldstone. Pp. x + 272, illustrated. W.B. Saunders, London, Philadelphia, Toronto, 1986. £15.00.

Copeman's Textbook of the Rheumatic Diseases. 2 vols. Sixth edition, edited by J.T. Scott. Pp. xxx + 1665, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £150.00.

Gastric Carcinoma, edited by M. Isabel Filipe and Jeremy R. Jass. Current Problems in Tumour Pathology Series. Pp. viii + 297, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £40.00.

Geriatric Anesthesia: Principles and Practice, edited by C.R. Stephen and Richard A.E. Assaf. Pp. viii + 376, illustrated.