Yet there are certain areas where greater clarity would have been welcomed. Terms such as guidelines, objective, aim and clinical standard are used without prior definition and at times, it would seem, interchangeably. Secondly, it may be incorrect to assume that these guidelines will do away with the need for procedures as is stated in the opening paragraphs of the book. The two may be quite compatible so long as the practitioner knows when and how to use them. Examples of how the objectives are being used would have helped to clarify this. And third, there may be a danger that untutored staff will use the statements as individual goals for patients, thereby negating any advances that this publication obviously wishes to promote.

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Pain Control, by J. Latham. Pp. x+106. Austen Cornish, in assoc. with The Lisa Sainsbury Foundation, London, 1987. £6.50.

Jane Latham's book *Pain Control* reinforces the principle that to treat pain effectively, one must first understand the mechanisms of pain.

The preliminary chapters explain the anatomy and physiology of pain, and how pain theories have been developed over the last 300 years that have resulted in 'the gate theory' of pain. These chapters are a little complicated in structure, and I feel that little has been devoted to explaining the important role of the endogenous opiates.

Pain assessment must take into account the physical and psychological state of the patient, and the chapter on the psychological aspects of pain is excellent. A point that is not reinforced is that pain is a symptom. It is vital to diagnose the cause of the symptom since treating the cause appropriately may well be the best way to deal with the pain it is producing.

I am afraid the chapter on analgesics is a little disappointing. We still find analgesics are poorly described by many, and it must always be stated that analgesia must be prescribed correctly, giving regular doses to suppress pain. The author does not stress this point. This criticism may be a little unfair, since I feel this book is directed at persons who already have a knowledge of analgesic prescribing.

The use of the syringe driver, injection techniques for treating pain and transcutaneous nerve stimulation, are then presented in the final 3 chapters.

In summary, it is a useful short volume. It is directed to nurses: however, it is also a useful resource for any professional who treats pain. It is not a book for the 'complete beginner', since it is not a comprehensive book on pain control. However, it would certainly complement other articles and books on pain control and should stimulate the reader.

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Recent Advances in Medicine (20), edited by A.M. Dawson & G.M. Besser. Pp. ix+266, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1987. £19.95.

This volume, number 20 in the series, is the first under the editorship of Dr Dawson and Professor Besser. In their brief preface they pay tribute to Nigel Compston who had been Editor to the Series for 20 years, a tribute which very many will echo.

This volume lives up to the standard of its predecessors. It was the aim of the editors to produce a series of articles that would be of interest and intelligible to the generalist and most achieved that aim. Inevitably, there will be some which the individual reviewer will find dull. The article on the Psychopathology of Civil Disorder sounded interesting, but needs a lot of pruning. Anybody who can write 'however, the natural course of reactions for some individuals tends to chronicity' could do with a tough editor. Only one article was not really intelligible to this generalist, and that was the article by A.L. Harris on 'Neoplasia Oncogenes and Growth Factors'. Fortunately, Sikora and Waxman explained the matter much more clearly in their review of 'New therapeutic strategies in oncology'.

There are excellent articles on growth, gut infections, allergic lung disease, heart failure and Parkinson's disease. It was a pity that the article on organ transplantation did not include a section on marrow transplantation.

Things move so fast these days that it is inevitable that some of the articles will already seem behind the times: thus the article on AIDS was unable to include anything about the use of azidothymidine. However, this is a particularly good summary of the clinical aspects of the problem. It is a pity that it is marred by a distance between the table of the new classification and the text (arabic numbers in the table, Roman numerals in the text; small numbers in the table, letters in the text). The book also includes a useful section on interventional radiology.

All in all, this book can be recommended. The efforts by authors to include modern views on the scientific basis of their subjects was particularly successful. The references are most helpful. This book should be in every hospital library.

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Recollections and Reflections, by Douglas Black. Pp. x+132, illustrated. Cambridge University Press, London, 1987. £14.95.

Sir Douglas Black explains at the outset why he eschewed autobiography in favour of arranging his memories by theme rather than timing. The product is a series of fascinating essays in which his experience in the practice of medicine together with his contributions to its progress are interwoven with perceptions and insights gained while he held a sequence of distinguished appointments: professor of medicine, chief scientist to the DHSS, and President of the Royal College of Physicians.