Synopsis of Ophthalmology, Sixth Edition, Jack J. Kanski. Pp. xi + 237. Butterworths, London, Boston, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington, 1990. £14.95.

The 6th edition of Jack Kanski's '*Synopsis*' is extensively revised and in 15 chapters and 237 pages presents a concentrated distillate of the broad range of ophthalmology. Some of the chapters present diseases of the eye and orbit according to anatomical position whilst others address particular diseases or groups of diseases, e.g., uveitis, the glaucomas and retinal detachment.

The presentation is clear and concise and the style easy to read. For each condition the cause, clinical features, signs and complications are considered together with clear guidelines for treatment. The sections dealing with orbital disease, uveitis, retinal vascular disorders and neuro-ophthalmology will be of particular interest to the non-ophthalmologist to whom ophthalmology is often a worrying mystery.

As minor criticisms for the next edition I would suggest inclusion of the principles involved in calculation of intraocular lens power and expansion of the section on refractive corneal surgery to include surgery for astigmatism and the excimer corneal laser. But these do not detract from the value of this excellent book which should be in every hospital library and which I recommend as a revision aid to both ophthalmologists and general physicians in training.

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ABC of Resuscitation, 2nd Edition, edited by T.R. Evans. Pp. x + 72, illustrated. British Medical Journal, London, 1990. Paperback UK £6.90/Overseas £9.

As an undergraduate or junior doctor it is all too easy to become engrossed in the small print of medical text-books in preparation for examinations, and to overlook the importance of basic practical procedures and routines involved in resuscitation. The welcome inclusion of life support techniques in these examinations and training curricula should hopefully provide candidates with a level of skills and abilities to match the increasing awareness of the importance of resuscitation in medical practice.

The book contains 18 chapters, edited by T.R. Evans, the Chairman of the UK Resuscitation Council; each provides a concise review of a wide range of resuscitation topics and procedures both outside and within hospital confines. The layout of each chapter enables important facts to be stressed, and the use of multiple charts, illustrations, check lists and drills makes reading a far more enjoyable and informative pursuit than forbidding pages of dense script.

Two of the three new articles in this second edition cover resuscitation in pregnancy and trauma victims; the current awareness of AIDS and hepatitis transmission risks during resuscitation has provoked the third new chapter by Dr Zideman which also includes reference to a wide range of literature on the subject. With respect to problems encountered in pregnancy, the average SHO on a resuscitation team is infrequently exposed to work on an obstetric unit, a place where lack of awareness, or

mishandling of an acute life-threatening event can have such devastating effects. This excellent article along with those covering neonatal and paediatric resuscitation emphasizes the physiological, anatomical and metabolic differences in these three groups of patients, and should alert the conscience of any potential member of a resuscitation team to become acquainted with the different equipment and requirements involved. They are a fitting tribute to the lifetime's work done in this field by Dr K.W. Cross, who died recently. Other important facets such as proper organization of a resuscitation room, and cardiac arrest team, the maintenance and updating of skills, and continued training are again included. The discrepancy between subjective and objective competence in performing resuscitation is emphasized. This is important, since the ability of the first person 'on the scene' to institute adequate cardiopulmonary resuscitation frequently determines the outcome and quality of long term survival.

The indiscriminate use of bicarbonate and calcium is discussed several times. To quote Mr Redmond 'more brains are damaged from inadequate than inappropriate resuscitation'. His article along with Andrew Marsden's emphasizes the necessity for an organized approach in the A & E department; I would, however, disagree with the latter author on the use of steroids in smoke inhalation and near drowning.

Despite more rigorous training and awareness of the need to improve our resuscitation skills, we should however not forget the ethics involved – the topic discussed in the final chapter by the president of the World Association for Emergency and Disaster Medicine, Dr Peter Baskett.

This publication should be read, digested and on the bookshelves of all individuals likely to encounter an emergency situation, both medical and paramedical, inside and outside hospital – at £6.45 there is no excuse.

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A Researcher's Guide to Scientific and Medical Illustrations, edited by T.D. Brock. Pp. xi + 210, illustrated. Springer-Verlag, Berlin, New York, London, 1990. Paperback DM38.00.

'Good planning can save time and money and result in easily understood, and interesting figures. Thoughtful planning is the most important part of an illustration'. This author in essence sets out to give good practical advice to anyone preparing scientific and medical illustration. From 'what to illustrate, how much information is needed, to finding out about the viewer and media requirements' are good leaders.

Emphasis is given to what kind of illustration is most suited, be it drawings, diagrams, photographs, charts or tables. Good advice is given on communicating with the professional illustrator. Originators of data may be surprised just how effective this can be. For researchers preparing their own visual artwork from statistical data there are useful tips on determining how best this should be presented.

Molecular graphics is particularly well discussed, giving an insight to the difficulties of presenting genetic sequences. Computer graphic generation for translating mathematical data into graphs is a powerful way to show results. These graphs are well supported by informative use of typography and symbols whether for publication or as a teaching slide.

For those who are involved in poster presentations this book would prove invaluable. 'It takes intelligence, even brilliance, to condense and focus information into a clear, simple presentation that will be read and remembered. Ignorance and arrogance are shown in a crowded, complicated, hard to read poster'.

There are few books on preparing effective visual scientific illustration. This must become an essential handbook to researcher and illustrator alike.

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Roundsmanship '90. A Yearbook Guide to Clinical Medicine, edited by Bruce B. Dan, *et al.* Pp. xii + 270, illustrated. Year Book Medical Publishers, Chicago, London, etc., 1990. Paperback £16.00.

This volume is a collection of summaries of important articles in the medical literature over the past year. It has been selected by a group of academic American physicians who have also commented on the substance and conclusion of the articles.

Such abstracts can never of course replace reading the original article but there is little doubt that there is enormous value in being able to get the flavour of the important work which has gone on in specialties other than ones own. The informative commentaries extend the educational value of the publication.

Scattered throughout the book are a collection of aphorisms which they describe as being clinical pearls and they certainly provide food for thought. However they certainly do not present any challenge to Hippocrates.

One is tempted to think of this as a treasure trove for those wishing to impress their seniors on teaching rounds, i.e. to exhibit 'roundsmanship'. Used thoughtfully it will be of much more value than this.

The volume is introduced by a short article by Robert G. Petersdorf, President of the American Medical Colleges about the nature of teaching rounds, and he ends it with some sound advice to the young doctor on how to orientate his reading. I would recommend this publication.

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Year Book of Family Practice 1990, Rakel, Avant, Driscoll, Prichard, and Smith, Pp. xvi + 510, illustrated. Year Book Medical Publishers, Chicago, London, etc, 1990. Hardback £41.50.

The introduction to this book states that its primary objective 'has always been to assist the family physician in remaining current with recent advances in medicine'. To attain this objective the editor and his associates have reviewed nearly 700 medical journals and have selected the most appropriate articles for publication. Their comments on the usefulness and appropriateness of each of the chosen studies are most helpful to the reader. There are 18 chapters, each covering a sub-division of medicine. The chapter entitled Family Problems is of importance to general practitioners, covering areas such as the effect of unemployment on mental health. There is an excellent cumulative subject index and also an author index. I would not regard every selection as being relevant to the British family practitioner. There is a preponderance of articles relating to HIV infection in the chapter entitled Infectious Disease, many of which would not be of interest to the British reader. However, there are many excellent articles such as 'The Benefits of Early Anti-Inflammatory Medication following Acute Ankle Injury' (Sloane *et al.*, *Injury* 20: 81-83, March 1989) which could alter the family practitioner's approach to his patient. None of the articles is very long and all are well presented, the graphs and illustrations being easy to understand. The family practitioner could use this book either as a reference book or as a book for glancing at during occasional free moments.

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My Heart's Health: A New Revolutionary View, Demetrio Sodi Pallares. Pp. xix + 198. Piccin, Padua, 1990. Cloth £16.00.

The views of Dr Pallares are unconventional from the view point of the typical modern cardiologist. There is much in this book which is based on fundamental principles of cellular biology and electrophysiology. A wide variety of disease processes are discussed at length and the author's view expounded in detail. Unfortunately, there is little here that a cardiologist would feel happy with in everyday clinical practice and I cannot recommend this book for this reason.

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