Book Reviews

Assisted Ventilation, edited by John Moxham. Pp. ix + 102, not illustrated. BMJ, London 1991. £8.95 UK, £11.00 overseas, paperback.

The subject of assisted ventilation has provided much difficulty to thoracic and general physicians, who look after patients in the intensive care unit. This short book is a collection of articles written by anaesthetists and physicians on various aspects of assisted ventilation, both in hospital and in the home, and provides a very comprehensive guide to this subject.

The book starts with an account of equipment and techniques of artificial ventilation, followed by a very useful account of the indications for mechanical ventilation, with discussion of the special problems in patients with underlying respiratory disease. There is a complete chapter on the general care of ventilated patients. This is followed by an excellent account of the mechanisms of ventilatory failure and principles of the complex subject of weaning, explaining some of the physiological reasons for failure of patients to wean from assisted ventilation. Non-invasive and domiciliary ventilation is also covered in this book, with a good and well-illustrated account of the older method of negative pressure ventilation and the more recently introduced technique of nasal intermittent positive pressure ventilation, which will have a number of important future applications.

The book is well referenced throughout, with a number of useful tables. Patients in intensive care should be cared for jointly by physicians and anaesthetists, and this book will enable the physician to be more familiar with the specific problems and management of ventilated patients.

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Medical Disorders during Pregnancy, edited by William M. Barron & Marshall D. Lindheimer. Pp. xiv + 603. Mosby Year Book, St Louis, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, 1990. £57, hardback.

This excellent text book will certainly prove useful to those general physicians who are from time to time called upon to give an opinion on a pregnant woman with a medical disorder. It sets out to span the abyss in expertise into which pregnant women with medical problems frequently fall and it achieves its aim admirably.

There are 19 chapters, each dealing with a particular subject such as heart disease, and liver and biliary tract disease. There are also particular useful chapters on drug abuse and neoplastic disease. Each chapter begins with a description of the physiological changes which occur during pregnancy, an essential pre-requisite to an understanding of pathology. There is an extensive bibliography at the end of each chapter which will provide a basis for

further reading on particular subjects. There are many useful tables, but possibly too few diagrams and illustrations. The text is well written by specialist authors from the USA, England and France. Inevitably, in chapters written by American contributors, management guidelines tend to be those used in the USA and this may, in certain cases, reduce the book's usefulness to physicians practising in the UK. For example, in the chapter on hypertension, parenteral magnesium sulphate is recommended as treatment of choice for eclamptic fits, whereas phenytoin would generally be used in UK practice.

However, notwithstanding these minor reservations, this is an informative and broad-ranging book which will, we are sure, find a valued place in the library of the general physician and obstetrician.

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More Everyday Aids and Appliances, edited by Graham P. Mulley. Pp. xii + 191, illustrated. BMJ London, 1991. £8.95 UK, £11.00 overseas, paperback.

This book is a compilation of a series of BMJ short articles and covers aids to homecare, appliances and mobility aids. As such it provides a companion to the previously published *Everyday Aids and Appliances*.

Areas which are covered under homecare include aids for visual impairment, preventing pressure sores, bed aids for home nursing, dressing aids, emergency alarms, feeding and kitchen aids, and a welcome chapter on leisure and recreation. Appliances discussed include breast prostheses, contact lenses, dentures, ocular prostheses, splints, trusses and wigs, and the final section covers mobility aids, including those for disabled drivers, calipers, crutches, ramps, rails, stairlifts and walking frames.

The same practical approach has been maintained as in the previous volume and this book contains a wealth of very useful information. Particularly welcome are very useful references at the end of each chapter, often including addresses, guides to further reading, particularly for patients themselves, and lists of manufacturers.

This book should certainly be available to all those with an interest in disability, including health care professionals, carers and disabled people themselves.

It should certainly find a place, not only in medical libraries, but also in public libraries and, perhaps, should be made available in health centres.

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