hazards of NSAIDs and ACE inhibitors, as well as cyclosporin nephrotoxicity. We have seen the introduction of monoclonal antibodies and an increase in the use of adrenaline as an inotropic agent, but the principles of fluid replacement, early dialysis and adequate nutrition remain the mainstay of management.

The hope is expressed that serial scoring methods can more accurately assess outcomes. This is now happening and the continuing dialogue between intensivists and physicians will lead to more efficient use of resources, and perhaps provide a powerful argument to the managers and politicians that techniques for preventing and treating renal failure must be properly funded.

There are likely to be many more changes in the next decade, but this book will be welcome in postgraduate libraries to provide an overview of acute renal failure for both undergraduates and postgraduates alike.

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Critical Care Algorithms, edited by R.F. Armstrong, C. Bullen, S.L. Cohen, M. Singer and A.R. Webb. Pp. xi + 100, illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Tokyo, 1991. £15.00, paperback.

A structured approach to management can help to achieve a better outcome from intensive care and many units already have their own protocols or algorithms for the management of common problems. This book from the Middlesex and UCH provides a collection of 36 flow charts covering a wide range of critical care practice. Each section consists of an algorithm with accompanying notes and a few references. The selection of topics ranges from relatively simple procedures such as the insertion of central venous catheters to complex problems such as the management of fulminant hepatic failure.

It is inevitable that the level of detail in different algorithms varies widely and although frequent cross references to the simpler protocols helps to alleviate this problem I feel that the more complex problems are less well served by the book's format. Similarly the quality of the accompanying notes varies and although there is a great deal of useful information it is sometimes not particularly well organized so that important facts can be obscured by detail and there is little indication of their relative importance. Although the references are well chosen they would be more useful if there was some indication as to the source of individual items of information.

In any book as didactic as this one there will be many points with which individual clinicians, particularly older ones, will disagree but the authors accept this and suggest in the introduction that the algorithms they propose are best used as the basis for local modification. The book would also be a useful source of reference for all doctors dealing with acutely ill patients and it is small enough to be carried in a white coat pocket, although I doubt that

the binding is robust enough to stand up to much of this treatment.

I can strongly recommend this inexpensive book to all doctors with an interest in critical care and in particular to anaesthetists preparing for the third part of the F.C. Anaes exam. It might also form a useful basis for the development of medical audit in critical care units.

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Methods for Field Trials of Interventions Against Tropical Diseases – A toolbox, edited by P.G. Smith and R.H. Morrow. Pp. xxii + 326, not illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 1991. £15, paperback.

Some major advances (their potential impact is vast) have been made during the last decade in the field of medicine in the tropics. The purpose of the UNDP/World Bank/WHO TDR programme is to promote and support research aimed at the control of major tropical diseases. The editors rightly point out in the preface however, that the testing of 'new tools and inventions in "field" conditions has not kept pace with the generation of new products'. With certain exceptions, detailed descriptions of procedures and methods essential for the successful conduct of a field trial against, for example, tuberculosis or leprosy are not readily available. The *raison d'être* for this concise text therefore, is 'to enhance the teaching and training materials that are available for the promotion of field research'. The sum total in fact is a 'reference volume' for use whilst planning, conducting and analysing the various stages of a field trial.

The editors, from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, respectively, have selected 21 contributors, not only from their home territories, but also from several developing countries. The 15 section headings are: types of intervention and their development; study design; study size; ethical considerations; community involvement; censuses and mapping; randomization and coding; outcome measures and case definition; questionnaires; social research methods; field organization; field laboratory methods; data processing; methods of analysis; and dissemination of results.

There is a veritable mine of invaluable 'information between these covers which will be used by every wise investigator working under tropical "field" conditions'; as the subtitle correctly suggests, it is in fact a 'toolbox'. The authors are to be congratulated on a most useful (and long overdue) contribution, which at £15.00 in a very well-produced paperbacked format, is magnificent value for money.

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