I am sure the general usefulness and qualities of the book are far greater than these minor criticisms. At £26.50, this is a very good value. Although the book is primarily meant for trainee clinical microbiologists, it would serve very well as a quick reminder to all grades of staff in hospital microbiology. All hospital laboratories should have a copy.

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Cancer, J.S. Tobias and C.J. Williams. Pp. 99, illustrated. Wolfe, London, St Louis, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, 1993. Paperback £8.95.

This pocket picture guide to cancer is one of a series of books that aims to provide an overview of some of the more common and visible effects of disease. Its layout is similar to the more comprehensive *Cancer: A Colour Atlas* by the same authors. For a small book, it aims to cover a broad subject, with sections on clinical behaviour of disease, therapeutic approaches, investigations, as well as examples of various tumours by system. Supportive and terminal care are also included. Although the quality of illustrations is high and there are few significant inaccuracies, the small format of the book inevitably means that only a limited coverage of such a vast subject can be achieved, and this significantly limits the value of this work.

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Clinical Examination, O. Epstein, C.D. Perkins, D.P. de Bruno and J. Cookson. Chapters, 12 in sections, illustrated. Mosby, London, St Louis, Baltimore, Chicago, Philadelphia, 1993. Paperback £19.95.

This paperback edition of a 'bestseller' is aimed at medical students and postgraduates acquiring or revising clinical skills. The chapters are well laid out, starting with a problem-orientated medical record. Although the technique of history-taking is well described, this chapter should also include the general examination, thereby leaving endocrine systems to occupy a justifiably separate section. Subsequent chapters address individual systems, describing anatomy and physiology before specific symptoms, normal and abnormal findings.

The strength of this book lies in the number of photographs, figures, tables and question boxes which complement the text, thereby conveying a vigorous and lucid message. The reproduction of colour photographs and X-rays is excellent. The dermatology stands out by its clarity and selection of photographs, whilst chapters on musculoskeletal disease and neurology are remarkable for their lucid text and illustrations. Particularly helpful is the section on the unconscious patient.

A shortcoming is the scant attention paid to the elderly patients, in whom differentiating between age-related physical changes and disease can be difficult. The oppor-

tunity to describe history taking and examination of the confused patient is missed, and there is insufficient detail about evaluating dementia and the activities of daily living. It would also be reassuring to see more illustrations depicting elderly people, since these make up the bulk of acute hospital admissions. Although standing out as a well-structured colourful introduction to the art of physical diagnosis the inadequate reference to elderly patients renders the book incomplete. Any recommendations to medical students should, therefore, be qualified.

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ABC of AIDS, 3rd edition, edited by M. Wadler. Pp. 86, illustrated. BMJ, London, 1993. Paperback £12.95.

This is the third edition in 6 years of this popular introduction to HIV disease. It is written in the short notes style of the popular British Medical Journal ABC series and covers all aspects of HIV medicine from counselling to virology. The chapters are short, concise and very easy to read and are complemented by many good illustrations, photographs and summary boxes. In spite of a massive increase in knowledge about HIV and AIDS since the last edition was published two years ago, the basic information covered in this book has remained relatively unchanged. There is, however, one new chapter, 'HIV infection and AIDS in the developing world', and three new authors. The book's strength lies in the ease with which a substantial amount of information and ideas can be assimilated without any prior knowledge of HIV disease. I only have minor criticisms, mainly relating to presentation. It would be much better to have some of the photographs omitted when they have been reproduced in such a small size as to be of no visual value, or where the same one has been used in more than one chapter. Some of the photographs of venesection or hospital wards should also be omitted, as could an extraordinary chest X-ray of TB where the image has been reversed and has a 3-D effect. Doing this might then keep the cost of publication low. The text is well written and mostly accurate. The transmission of HIV through breast milk is well documented, but one of the summary boxes questions this route of transmission and should be amended. Some of the advice for treating MAC, called *Mycobacterium avium complex* in one chapter and *Mycobacterium avium intracellulare* in another should be updated, and isoniazid not recommended for treatment. The new chapter on the developing world has almost a page taken up on the WHO clinical case definition and the suggested case definition for AIDS in Africa. As there are at least four case definitions in practice, this space might have been used more usefully to discuss issues such as the impact of HIV on the family and economy. In spite of these relatively minor criticisms the book should remain essential reading for all of those who want a well-produced, easy to follow introduction to HIV medicine.

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