Books received

ABC of sports medicine, G McLathchie, M Harries, J King, C Williams, eds. pp vii+109, illustrated. BMJ Publishing Group, London, 1995. £14.95, paperback

Major incident medical management and support: the practical approach, TJ Hodgets, K Mackway-Jones. pp x+205, illustrated. BMJ Publishing Group, London, 1995. £22.95, paperback

The first year of life, 4th edn, HB Valman. pp vi+106, illustrated. BMJ Publishing Group, London, 1995. £12.95, paperback

Continuous spikes and waves during slow sleep, A Beaumanoir, M Bureau, T Deonna, CA Tassinari, eds. pp xi+250, illustrated. John Libbey & Company Limited, London, 1995. £32.00, hardback

Nuclear medicine: science and safety, A Perkins. pp x+182, illustrated. John Libbey & Company Limited, London, 1995. £24.00, hardback

Epithelial cancer of the ovary, FG Lawton, JP Neijt, KD Swenerton, eds. pp xviii+299, illustrated. BMJ Publishing Group, London, 1995. £44.95, hardback

Book reviews

Cardiovascular physiology

Cardiovascular physiology, H-M Priebe, K Skarvan, eds. pp xii+311, BMJ Publishing Group, London, 1995. £29.95, paperback

This book is composed of a series of authoritative and well-referenced reviews on various aspects of cardiovascular physiology. The subject matter for each of the reviews has been chosen so that, in combination, they provide a well-ordered and integrated text. The book will be of particular interest to anaesthetists in training, for whom it may become required reading. For those of us who are no longer burdened with having to pass exams it can function on two levels. Firstly, it provides a very useful, up to date and readable revision of an important subject, and, secondly, the individual chapters together with their references are an excellent starting point for anyone wishing to delve more deeply into a particular aspect of cardiovascular physiology.

In their preface, Priebe and Skarvan were not sure whether a detailed knowledge of cardiovascular physiology was necessary to be a good anaesthetist. It may not be necessary but I am sure it helps. Only time will tell if reading their book has made me a better anaesthetist. I can state with certainty, however, that I enjoyed reading it, and it will improve my teaching of junior anaesthetists.

In a rapidly developing area no text can be expected to remain up to date for long and the eventual success of this book will be determined by the frequency with which it can be revised and kept abreast of the latest research. The chosen format should facilitate this. This the first edition is excellent and I highly recommend it.

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Vaccines

Vaccines and vaccination Mackett M, Williamson JD. xiv+215 pp, illustrated. Bios Scientific Publishers, Oxford UK, 1995. £19.95, paperback.

This book is part of a medical perspective series and includes sections outlining in detail the history of communicable diseases, their aetiological agents and methods of pathogen-

esis, the host's responses, and the theory and practice of vaccine development. Examples are given including Epstein-Barr virus vaccine development and an interesting history of the development of hepatitis B vaccines. The final chapter is entitled 'Discussion' and is the most accessible for a clinician.

This book provides a useful summary of the vaccine 'state of the art'. This assessment begs the question "For whom?" There is no doubt that the immunologically naive would find their 'cerebral hard disc' suffering from data overload. As examples, the list of acronyms, wisely placed at the start, totals no less than 130 entries and some figures whilst having simple and clear foundations, are of startling complexity. Most clinicians would accept that their knowledge of immunology has limits, beyond which they accept that sophisticated knowledge and techniques are used which they have little need to comprehend in detail.

For clinicians with an interest in infection and a need for specialised knowledge this book is a valuable reference. However I suspect that the main readership will be drawn from laboratory-based researchers.

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Work-related diseases

Epidemiology of work related diseases McDonald JC, ed. x+498 pp, illustrated. BMJ Publishing Group, London, 1995. £49.95, hardback.

Professor McDonald has persuaded 23 distinguished authors from nine countries to write articles of excellence on work-related diseases; papers by McDonald, Waldron and Weill alone would make splendid eponymous lectures.

The editor comments on irresponsible journalism and self-interested lawyers, and pleads for better arrangements for research funding with a less confrontational press. The book will be useful to all healthcare professionals, to lawyers engaged on occupation-related litigation, and is particularly appealing to those giving medico-legal reports, whether medical, surgical or obstetrical. The cost of the book is worth it for the 1400 references alone, on such subjects as ionising radiation,

electro-magnetic fields, mineral dusts, neuro-behavioural effects, agricultural work and the effects of pregnancy, asthma, the dermatoses and noise and vibration.

Although nine writers are from 'environmental' departments, none gives any real consideration to the physical environment. The six Canadian writers tell us nothing about their high arctic climate, or how the Franklin tragedy might have been averted by proper occupational history-taking from Inuit hunters. There is no reference to Beattie of Edmonton on lead poisoning; to Schilling's work (done with considerable trawler-owner opposition) on North Sea accidents to fishermen; the hazards of heat exhaustion to desert soldiers; or the possibility of a Gulf War syndrome.

This thought-provoking book is to be highly recommended: hopefully with a reprint or a second edition, missing chapters on environmental factors, military medicine, and perhaps molecular epidemiology can be included

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