diagnoses if the eardrum is red or retracted?"

The book makes frequent use of sections for the specialist which are of limited value for the senior specialist but certainly would be of use to otologists in training or for those wishing to extend their knowledge. Overall, I feel this book will improve the understanding of all who are required to look at ears.

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Performance management

Performance management and appraisal in health services, Martin Edis. pp 160, illustrated. Kogan Page, London, 1995. £12.95, paperback

In a finance-constrained NHS, every last pound must be used to the best effect, and the management of people, the biggest and most important resource of all, must be managed optimally. This concise book sets out to get to the core of what is important in all aspects of managing performance and to give health managers practical advice on how to do it. In almost every respect, it achieves it and offers real guidance, particularly to a newcomer to the subject.

Martin Edis, the author, has laid out his book in a clear, concise style, with each element of performance management and appraisal the subject of a chapter. The text is interspersed with telling but simple diagrams, flow charts, check lists and tables, and each chapter has a useful summary. Management theory is covered in a referenced, but fairly jargon-free way, and is linked to practical advice with relevant workplace examples. The

author clearly has a good understanding of how hospitals work.

The chapter on appraisal is particularly interesting. Staff appraisal can be of great value but is never easy and this section offers good advice on how to cover a tricky discipline. The case studies are well thought out and a positive benefit.

In summary, this book offers a comprehensive, but simple approach to an increasingly important area which is traditionally badly done. It is highly readable, but is also a good reference which can be dipped into for practical pointers. It is a must for the new manager or someone designing a performance management system.

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Books received

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