

## Books received

- Alcohol Problems. Reviews, Research and Recommendations.* Edited by DAVID ROBINSON. Pp. 254, illustrated. Macmillan Press, London, 1979. £10.00.
- A Colour Atlas of Pathogenic Fungi.* By D. FREY, R. J. OLDFIELD & R. C. BRIDGER. Pp. 168, illustrated. Wolfe Medical Publications, London, 1979. £16.00.
- Epilepsy '79. Perspectives on Epilepsy.* Pp. 122, illustrated. British Epilepsy Association, Wokingham, Berks, 1979. £2.00 (plus 30p postage).
- Modern Topics in Paediatric Dermatology.* Edited by JULIAN VERBOV. Pp. 220, illustrated. William Heinemann Medical Books, London, 1979. £11.50.
- National Food Policy in the UK. CAS Report 5. Centre for Agricultural Strategy.* Pp. 116. Centre for Agricultural Strategy, University of Reading, 1979. £2.85.

- The Normal Child. Some Problems of the Early Years and their Treatment.* By R. S. ILLINGWORTH. 7th edn. Pp. ix + 353, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London and New York, 1979. £9.00.
- Operative Surgery. Fundamental International Techniques in Plastic Surgery.* Edited by J. WATSON AND R. McCORMACK. 3rd edn. Pp. 556, illustrated. Butterworths, London, Boston, 1979. £55.00.
- Practical Guide for Medical Officers for Environmental Health.* Compiled by ANDREW B. SEMPLE AND J. K. JOHNSTON. Pp. 81. Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust, London, 1979. £2.50.
- Treatment of Common Acute Poisonings.* By HENRY MATTHEWS AND A. A. H. LAWSON. 4th edn. Pp. 210. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London and New York, 1979. £6.00.

## Book reviews

### Antimicrobial Prophylaxis in Surgery

Edited by M. R. B. KEIGHTLY AND D. W. BURDON. Pp. x + 241. Pitman Medical, Tunbridge Wells, 1979. £12.00 (hardback).

The dawn of the antibiotic era brought with it the hope that surgical infections would soon disappear from our hospital wards. This hope rapidly evaporated over the next few years and sepsis remains to-day as one of the most serious problems which may follow major surgery. Infection is particularly likely to occur when operations are carried out on patients whose resistance to sepsis is impaired by disease or lowered by many of the powerful modern therapeutic agents. It often occurs, of course, when surgery is performed on patients who are already septic but the infection rate is also high when the alimentary canal and its adnexae or the urinary tract are opened. Infection is also common following tracheostomy and septicaemia may follow urethral catheterization and the use of intravenous 'long lines'. An especial worry is infection complicating the large number of prosthetic implants which are used in modern surgery.

Against this background we can welcome the publication of *Antimicrobial Prophylaxis in Surgery*. The two authors of this monograph—a surgeon and a bacteriologist—provide us with an important source book on the control of surgical infection by means of antimicrobials. After introductory chapters on the aetiology of surgical infection, the principles of chemoprophylaxis and the useful description of the various antibiotic agents, subsequent sections detail the special problems presented by 'clean operations', gastrointestinal surgery, trauma and orthopaedics, other specialist surgical procedures, intravenous catheters, dialysis and transplantation, burns and the particular problems of post-operative respiratory tract infection and tracheotomy. The text is clear, dogmatic and practical. The references are copious and up to date so that this is a book that can be confidently recommended to surgeons and pathologists in training—and their chiefs.

### Assessment of the Elderly Patient—2

By F. I. CAIRD AND T. G. JUDGE. 2nd edn. Pp. xiv + 136. Pitman Medical, Tunbridge Wells, 1979. £5.00.

This compact little book is written by two of the leading

physicians in geriatric medicine and clearly demonstrates their experience and ability to communicate the essentials of the history, clinical examination, social problems, and normal laboratory values; i.e., the viewing of the elderly patient as a 'totality' rather than just another case of renal failure, etc. It is important for the medical student and doctor to appreciate the difference in presentation of disease and approach to examination, and variation in what may be considered normal in the systems. All this is presented with clarity and in a very readable manner by the authors.

This book, packed with facts and practical advice, can be highly recommended to all those involved with the problems of the elderly.

### The Biochemistry of Atherosclerosis

Edited by A. M. SCANU, R. W. WISSLER AND G. E. GETTLER. *The Biochemistry of Disease: A Molecular Approach to Cell Biology. Series of Monographs. Vol. 7.* Pp. xx + 544, illustrated. Marcel Dekker, New York, 1979. Sw. fr. 112.00.

This is an elegant—and to lipoprotein enthusiasts an important and enjoyable—book, written and edited by some of the most distinguished leaders in this field. But its subject is not the biochemistry of atherosclerosis; we are 293 pages into its 480 before the artery is mentioned. Nor do the remaining pages hint that factors other than lipids and lipoproteins are involved in the biochemistry of this disease.

In fact, the book comprises a series of competent and in some instances excellent state-of-the-art essays on selected topics in the field of lipoprotein metabolism. Lipoprotein structure is predictably well reviewed and there is a valuable account of lipoprotein measurement by immunochemical methods. The review of lipoprotein interactions with arterial endothelium and smooth-muscle cells is eminently worth reading. Dr W. E. Connor gives a persuasive account of the role of dietary cholesterol as well as that of dietary fat as determinants of plasma cholesterol levels.

*The Biochemistry of Atherosclerosis* is attractively presented and well illustrated. It can be recommended to those workers in lipoprotein research who can afford it, and as a reference book for those less specialized.