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Postgraduate Medical Journal publishes original papers on subjects of current clinical importance and welcomes review articles with extensive, up-to-date bibliographies as guides to further reading. Several symposia are published each year, each devoted to a single subject and written by specialists in different disciplines. Most issues include authoritative Current Surveys of clinical problems, and well documented Reports of cases of particular interest, and Book Reviews.

A 'Notice to Contributors' is published on the inside back cover of this issue. The Editor reserves the right to make changes which may clarify or condense papers where this is considered desirable.

The Journal is covered by *Current Contents* and *Biological Abstracts*.

EDITORIAL MATTERS

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Books received

Topical Steroid Treatment for Asthma and Rhinitis. Edited by N. MYGIND and T. J. H. CLARK. Pp. x+188, illustrated. Baillière Tindall, London, 1980. £9.50.

The Tuberculin Test in Clinical Practice. An illustrated guide. By MAXWELL CAPLIN. Pp. xi+84, illustrated. Baillière Tindall, London, 1980. Paperback £5.75.

Book reviews

Compliance in Health Care

Edited by R. BRIAN HAYNES, D. WAYNE TAYLOR and DAVID L. SASKETT. Pp. xvi+516, illustrated. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1979. £15.00.

This book constitutes the current reference manual on compliance. In fact, 170 of the 516 pages consist of an annotated bibliography. The editors maintain that the book is 'a reference, not a novel' and do not expect it to be read from cover to cover. However, certain chapters are very readable.

The varying results from different studies of compliance are presented and the reasons for their discrepancies are intelligently discussed. There is also no hesitation in asking the question 'Why bother about non-compliance?' We are strongly advised to interpret the results of compliance studies according to whether or not 'treatment goals' are achieved.

The methods of measuring patient non-compliance are discussed in detail together with the clinical and psychological features that determine non-compliance. Certain chapters are loaded with 'jargon' phrases, but on the whole the reader soon copes with the 'health belief model', 'motivation and threat variables', 'homilectics', etc.

The strategies suggested for reducing non-compliance include reminders for appointments, explicit verbal and written instructions about medication, special packages for pills, simplified drug regimens and increased supervision. The effects of non-compliance in the execution of the clinical trials and the interpretation of results from such trials are dealt with.

Many problems are raised. To what extent is non-compliance confused with non-comprehension and should we study doctors' compliance with generally accepted treatment recommendations? Perhaps these questions lie more in the province of medical audit.

Overall, the book is a must for those researching in the field of compliance. In fact, one chapter is devoted to the methods that should be used in such research.

Epilepsies of Childhood

By NIALL V. O'DONOHUE. Pp. x+318, illustrated. Butterworths, London, etc., 1979. £16.00.

This is a most welcome addition to the literature on epilepsy in childhood, and may well be the best available book on the subject for the clinician who is, after all, the person most closely concerned with its problems.

These problems are legion, and are often not related directly to the seizures themselves but to the associated difficulties, the medication or the limiting effects which the tendency to recurrent attacks (which constitute epilepsy)

have upon the life of the child. Childhood epilepsy is among the most demanding disorders in the whole of medicine, yet these demands are often poorly met, through lack of experience, failure to appreciate the differences from epilepsy in adult life, and perhaps the mixed feelings towards the subject in which distaste and even fear have a part, even in the minds of the most enlightened.

Dr O'Donohue here distils the essence of many years' experience. His approach is appropriately based on development since the phenomena of epilepsy are profoundly influenced by the stage of maturation of the young nervous system. He uses the International Classification to the extent that it is appropriate to childhood epilepsy. All aspects of the subject, diagnostic, therapeutic and psychological are well discussed. In reviewing the literature, recent advances are stressed as well as the classical contributions of the past, and controversial topics such as febrile convulsions, their importance and management, are discussed in a well balanced way. Precise details of drug dosage in prophylactic anticonvulsant medication and the management of status epilepticus are clearly presented.

All paediatricians and all who may be called on to cope with children with seizures should invest in this book, publication of which in 'The Year of the Child' can be regarded as among the more potentially helpful events of the year, if it reaches its audience.

General Pathology

By J. B. WALTER and M. S. ISRAEL. 5th edn, Pp. iv+701, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London and New York, 1979. £20.00.

In the 16 years since 'Walter & Israel' was first published it has established itself as one of the leading text books of pathology both for medical students and for those studying for higher degrees. The production of a 50th edition is clear evidence of its deserved popularity.

As alluded to in the preface an increasing understanding of basic pathological processes and new techniques of investigation including endoscopic and needle biopsies together with the availability of more powerful and specific drugs means that it is increasingly important for a clinician to have a basic grounding in pathology if he is to treat patients intelligently. This new edition adequately covers most of the advances, although, as the authors state, it is not intended to be a comprehensive account of recent advances.

The text is clearly set out, new illustrations have been included most of which are excellent and lucid drawings and diagrams are used to illustrate some of the points. It is unfortunate that in common with many other text books some

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Typescripts. Two complete copies should be sent to the Editor, Postgraduate Medical Journal, Chandos House, 2 Queen Anne Street, London W1M 9LE. Papers should be typewritten on one side of the paper only, with a 1½ inch margin, and the lines should be double spaced. The paper should bear the name of the author(s) with their degrees and the name of the laboratory or research institute where the work has been carried out. The full address of the principal author should be given as a footnote.

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Page proofs will be submitted to the senior author for minor corrections and should be returned to the Editor within 3 days. Major alterations to the text cannot be accepted.

Offprints. These may be purchased if ordered on the form which will be sent to the senior author with the proofs.

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