

answer each batch using the relevant technique. I am uncertain whether the change from type to type through each section is altogether satisfactory, but it does provide experience in different methods which would stimulate mental agility.

The book is divided into 7 sections with the correct answers grouped on the last few pages. The first section embraces Autonomic Pharmacology, including skeletal muscle, local anaesthetics and anti-arrhythmics. The second includes digoxin and diuretics with endocrine pharmacology. The next covers reproductive pharmacology while the fourth deals with central nervous system pharmacology. The fifth section involves cancer chemotherapy and human anti-parasitic chemotherapy (a rather neglected field). The sixth is on drug disposition and metabolism. The last section is devoted to applied pharmacology. While most MCQs are conventional in presentation, graphs, diagrams and problems are occasionally used. Some questions in all sections are easy to answer while others provide severe tests and some are very difficult and require a highly specialized knowledge, but the mix is about right so that the student may see the panorama of MCQs for which he may be at risk.

If used systematically, the student should be able to practise answering MCQs and to monitor his knowledge of pharmacology and be able to pick out areas of weakness which could be corrected by consulting a text book.

For the university teacher this book provides a large and diverse collection of MCQs which can be used as a source of MCQs and it also engenders stimulation and inspiration leading to the construction of new MCQs for local examination purposes.

At £3.50, this book represents a 'good buy' alike for medical and dental students and for academic staff interested in medical pharmacology.

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#### An Outline of Energy Metabolism in Man

By GORDON L. ATKINS. Pp. 96, illustrated. William Heinemann Medical Books, London, 1981. £4.95.

The reviewer approached this little book with considerable reserve. Intermediate metabolism is, to coin a phrase, a well ploughed field. Complex metabolic charts have become major allergens to anybody working in or on the fringes of biochemical medicine. Lecture notes rarely if ever transform into readable books. "Energy metabolism" sounds slightly pretentious. None of these forebodings were in fact, justified.

This is an excellent summary of current teaching of human biochemistry—not perhaps bedside reading but clear, well balanced and exceptionally well focused on essentials. The last attribute is particularly rare. The charts are built up gradually and logically instead of assailing the eye and mind with a jumble of arrows, crosses, circles, dotted lines, bold arcs and minuscule print. The fact that the origin of the book was a series of lecture notes (for anaesthetists working for the FFA RCS Part I—most of them, one imagines, aglow at the prospect of forgetting all about energy metabolism as soon as the exam is over) does, of course, show: the tone is brisk and dogmatic and conveys little of the uncertainty that still surrounds much of the subject. But there is room for such an approach. And the title, if not perhaps quite accurate, is justified by the author's interpretation of biochemical reactions and pathways in terms of energy turnover. This is a real advance over most current teaching texts and has a welcome unifying effect. It might, who knows, even spark off

real interest in some of his non-biochemical readers to whom the subject might otherwise seem to have been designed for the sole purpose of obstructing their clinical progress to the stars. The book has been pleasingly produced and printed and it is by no means unreasonably priced. A useful publication.

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#### Problems in Respiratory Medicine

By PAUL FORGACS. Problems in Practice Series. Pp. 158, illustrated. M.T.P. Press, Lancaster, 1981. £7.95.

Dr Paul Forgacs' book *Problems in Respiratory Medicine* proves a worthy addition to other books published in this series, relating to various specialities. The author has already established a reputation for himself as one who has clarified the symptoms and clinical signs in chest medicine that we may now all speak a common language when we refer to crackles and wheezes.

The book deals mainly with the common chest diseases and mentions the more obscure only when dealing with differential diagnoses. I found the marginal headings very helpful, as I think they would be to GPs when scanning the pages.

The detail is adequate and the straightforward prose makes the book eminently readable. The diagrams are simple and the tables uncluttered with detail.

I have no hesitation in recommending this book not only for GPs but as an introduction to chest medicine for medical students.

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#### Respiratory Medicine

By DAVID C. FLENLEY. Baillière's Concise Medical Textbooks. Pp. 263, illustrated. Baillière Tindall, London, 1981. £6.50 (paperback).

One can find few faults with this excellent book, except, perhaps, to regret that Professor Flenley did not write it earlier. It admirably fulfils its objective of providing a short text book of respiratory medicine; bridging the gap between the respiratory chapters of general medical text books and the more comprehensive specialist works. In places, this book seems to provide rather more information than the specialist publications, particularly with respect to practical details of treatment. Although written in a condensed style, it is very readable and not without the occasional dash of humour.

The bulk of a volume of this size must, of course, be devoted to the important, common conditions, such as asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis and bronchial carcinoma. Accounts of these subjects are very up to date. The author confesses to a dogmatic approach but, nevertheless, succeeds in giving a balanced view of current research and opinion. The diversity of the literature on the immunology and pathogenesis of conditions such as emphysema is condensed into very clear accounts, sometimes supported by useful diagrams. The book is liberally illustrated with line drawings, many of them devoted to interpretation of chest X-rays. There are also a few diagrams of CT scans of the thorax, which are now increasingly used in chest medicine.

As one would expect from this author, the physiological background is very adequately covered in the opening chapters. I was pleased to see that a significant amount of space was given to symptoms and interpretation of physical signs. This seems most appropriate in view of the frequent difficulty which undergraduate and postgraduate students alike