Books received

- Bailey and Love's Short Practice of Surgery*. 18th edn. Revised by A. J. HARDING RAINS and H. DAVID. Pp. xii+1370, illustrated. H. K. Lewis, London, 1981. £23.00.
- Baillière's Medical Transparencies. Disease from the Tropics*. Set 1 (23 slides). Set 2 (24 slides). By A. D. M. BRYCESON and V. E. ANDSELL. Paperback with slides mounted in plastic wallet. 10 pp. per set. Baillière Tindall, London, 1981. £18.50+VAT £1.78 (not sold singly).
- Bladder Cancer. A Series of Workshops on the Biology of Human Cancer*. Report no. 13. Edited by P. SKRABANEK and A. WALSH. UICC Technical Report Series, vol. 60,

- Pp. 192. International Union against Cancer, Geneva, 1981. Sw. Fr. 32.00.
- Boundary and Space. An Introduction to the Work of D. W. Winnicott*. By MADELEINE DAVIS and DAVID WALLBRIDGE. Pp. xiv+196, H. Karnac, London, 1981. £9.00.
- Clinical Investigation of Respiratory Disease*. Edited by T. J. H. CLARK. Pp. xiv+526, illustrated. Chapman and Hall, London, 1981. £22.50.
- Children who have Fits*. By G. P. McMULLIN. Pp. 64. Duckworth, London, 1981. £3.95.

Books reviewed

Children Who Have Fits

G. P. McMULLIN, pp. 64. Duckworth, London, 1981. £3.95.

The provision of factual data to help parents understand more about a child's disorder seems self-evidently useful. Dr McMullin's booklet entitled *Children Who Have Fits* sets out to do this. Unfortunately, the result is a mixture of good clinical description suitable for parents or doctors (although it is puzzling why incontinence is omitted as occurring in grand mal seizures until the summary on p. 57) and a text sometimes more appropriate to a professional treatise than for a work intended for potentially anxious parents. An example is a complex discussion on prognosis based on the statistical data (pp. 51-52) and the use of jargon like 'focal lesion'. There are also major omissions. There are no indications where families could get help and advice if that already being provided does not seem to be answering their needs. There is nothing concerning possible problems likely to be met during education, nor about the different problems arising during adolescence.

A rather bland optimism evident throughout would be more helpful if linked to clear and supportive information.

The choice of drugs for different types of seizures is detailed and this again seems inappropriate unless we envisage a time when parents will need to check on their paediatricians. Regrettably, I feel that a potentially useful shot has missed its target.

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Clinical Heart Disease

By SAMUEL ORAM. 2nd edn. Pp. viii+953, illustrated. William Heinemann Medical Books, 1981. £50.00.

This second edition of a well-established Textbook of Cardiology has been rewritten to take account of the important advances in technology and practice of cardiology that have taken place since the first edition was published in 1971.

Many cardiologists keep themselves informed of current cardiological practice by the numerous monographs on various aspects of this discipline. This book will therefore be particularly orientated as a practical guide and reference book for the general clinician, the physician with an interest in cardiology and for students undertaking postgraduate training and postgraduate examinations.

This book is founded on a strong clinical bias and includes sufficient information of modern investigatory procedures, particularly echocardiography and isotope studies, without over-burdening the general reader with the finer point of these technologies. At the end of each chapter there is a well-balanced reference section, including many recent publications and a list of salient features of particular interest to be emphasized from the foregoing chapter.

The book has been liberally endowed with many figures to amplify the text, but the quality of some of the X-rays could have been improved. Clearly one detects that some of the X-rays and ECGs have been drawn from Dr Oram's vast cardiological practice and therefore suffer from the lack of advances in modern-day presentation of such figures.

In a day and age when many new drugs and trials are constantly reported, this book has certainly reported many recent results.

This book is an essential publication fulfilling all the traditions of British cardiology, particularly with its strong clinical bias. It can be warmly recommended as a reference book for the clinician, the general physician with an interest in cardiology and for those studying for higher degrees. At £50, however, this price may slightly restrict its circulation.

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A Colour Atlas of Paediatric Surgical Diagnosis

By L. SPITZ, G. M. STEINER and R. B. ZACHARY. Pp. 240 illustrated. Wolfe Medical Publications, London, 1981. £30.00.

This new atlas consists of 772 illustrations, the majority of which are colour plates. Almost one-quarter of the illustra-

tions are radiographs, and there are also quite a few drawings and ultrasonograms.

The book is concerned with surgical diagnosis in children. The authors intentionally excluded cardiac surgery. Almost half the atlas is devoted to the thorax and abdomen. The balance here is good and this section will undoubtedly prove quite useful.

The neurosurgical section is rather brief. Although the use of CT scanning is stressed, I feel there is still need to have a limited series of air ventriculograms. A single contrast film is not really sufficient for an atlas.

The illustrations on clefts of the lip and palate need some alterations to correct the sides and to make them correspond more clearly with the classification. Some other slides appear to have the right and left sides reversed as in 695 and 476.

Although the urology section is good, I think the absence of illustrations of urethral prolapse and vaginal urethra is a pity. For the inexperienced, the vaginal urethra is not an infrequent cause of inability to pass a catheter. In the same section, the uterine ectopic ureter in drawing number 571 must be a curiosity, I suspect.

The atlas cannot be considered comprehensive, but in just over 200 pages, the authors succeeded in producing a concise and valuable supplement to paediatric surgical diagnosis. The book should prove quite useful to senior students, residents and trainee surgeons but unfortunately, at 15 pence a page, few people other than libraries will be able to afford a copy.

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A Guide to Radiological Procedures

By S. CHAPMAN and R. NAKIELNY. Pp. 250. Bailliere Tindall, London, 1981. £6.50.

There has been a revolution in the field of diagnostic imaging in the past few years. Ultrasound and CT scanning have become firmly established and the applications and use of radioisotope imaging have also expanded. In addition there have been widespread advances in so-called interventional radiology so that a radiologist today may be involved in newer techniques involving treatment such as percutaneous kidney drainage, removal of stones in the common bile duct, percutaneous angioplasty and tumour embolization. This book is a guide to practical procedures produced by two radiologists in Bristol who were recently successful in the Fellowship examination of The Royal College of Radiologists and who felt during their training that there was a need for such a concise but comprehensive guide. The forward, by Sir Howard Middlemiss, points out that the methods described represent current practice in Bristol and that inevitably there may be local differences.

Particularly with newer and sophisticated procedures there is no substitute for personal tuition from an established practitioner. Nevertheless there is a need for an up-to-date textbook which describes individual techniques. It is stated that this book is intended primarily for radiologists in training but that it may also be of interest and use to radiographers who of course need to understand the basic principles of the techniques in which they are involved.

In these aims it succeeds and the advice given is generally sound. References are given for further reading and I can recommend this book as a useful addition to the library of all X-ray Departments.

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Handbook of Intensive Care

R. S. ATKINSON, J. J. HAMBLIN and J. E. C. WRIGHT. Pp. ix + 386, illustrated. Chapman and Hall, London, 1981. £16.50.

Books on intensive care are few and far between and good ones tuned to British practice almost non-existent. This book is therefore appropriately aimed at a gap which it looks well suited to fill. It is readable but concise; comprehensive but not ponderous and, though written by three authors with three additional contributors, the editorial pen has been wielded to produce a cohesive feel to the whole.

Because intensive care tends to cream off the majority of the acutely ill in a large general hospital, the authors have worked on a broad brief giving succinct (and usually credible) accounts of management of the common general medical emergencies. In addition there are conventional chapters on ventilation, intravenous nutrition, and poisoning, among others and these are mostly excellent.

Some minor grouses are inevitable; if the book is 'essentially a practical manual' then why are practical procedures dealt with so relatively superficially? Surely this book is aimed at people encountering ICU work for the first time—either whole time in the SHO or in the Registrar grade as a part of training in anaesthesia or general medicine? This book is almost comprehensive enough to be a mandatory reference work in the ICU yet the index is rather thin; looking up, for example the correction factor applied to pH in hypothermia was difficult as it was not mentioned in the index nor in the sections on hypothermia but was found on systematic reading in the Acid-Base chapter.

However, these are minor problems and at £16.50 it is an absolute must: buy it and use it and wait for the authors to iron out the first edition's minor teething troubles.

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The State of Medicine

By JOHN W. TODD. Pp. 235. MTP Press, Lancaster, 1981. £11.95.

It is perhaps a regrettable reflection upon human nature that we see Polonius as such a bore—all that distillation of experience and repetition of good advice evokes, too often, impatience, not attention. Yet the advice remains good and the opinions are as valid as they were when newly minted. Dr Todd has over the years contributed much wise commentary upon the developing medical scene and now brings together his thoughts in this small but ambitiously titled volume. It is not always clear what audience he is addressing: sometimes the medical profession is being thrashed for its shortcomings, sometimes the nature of illness and defects of doctors are being explained to the lay public. There is perhaps some riding of hobby-horses, and tilting at old-fashioned windmills, but there is also some very good sense. The readers may well find some new sympathy with the teachers of anatomy who must by now be accustomed to castigation as dullards, although somehow surviving as purveyors of necessary knowledge. Those other whipping boys, the eminent physicians and surgeons, who were so consciously 'great men' and whose *ex cathedra* pronouncements formed the basis for so much medical education, have no doubt by now trimmed their teaching to contemporary expectations but remain eminent and are still entitled to present their experience in digestible form. Dr Todd has been able to catalogue a formidable list of the past errors of medicine, deriving from unsupported theory and misinterpreted data, which lead him to seek stricter criteria. So great is his faith in the establishment of truth by controlled clinical trials that one can only conclude that he has not been intimately in-