

diagnosis. Considerable skill is required to carry out the crucial tests and prevent the patient being subjected to unnecessary investigations and hence a waste of time and money.

This book helps the clinician to select those tests which will be most rewarding and, with knowledge of their relative importance and accuracy, to plan the diagnostic process, measure the severity of the disease, assess the progress of the disease and the success or otherwise of treatment.

The range of subjects covered is wider than the title suggests. The first chapter on 'Lung Sounds' is intended to increase the diagnostic accuracy when using the stethoscope. The visual recording of crackles and wheezes, like the recording of the heart sounds in the phonocardiogram, is an elegant way of analysing these noises. The recording method, however, is too complicated for routine clinical use, but the clinician can transfer the examples illustrated, into his own auscultatory experience.

The chapter on physiology by Dr D.M. Denison is an excellent analysis of lung function and, by using relevant models, explains the complexities of lung mechanics. He then outlines the tests he thinks are important and gives a series of examples on patients studied at the Brompton Hospital. Not everyone would agree with his order of priorities. Blood gas analysis is surely the next most important test to simple spirometry. However, his approach is stimulating and many of his ideas deserve more detailed consideration.

Further chapters on exercise testing, screening and radiology follow and, as can be seen from the titles of these chapters, the work becomes a collection of unrelated essays rather than a guide to the diagnostic process. It might have been better to follow the normal chronological process, and, having started with the physical examination of the patient, proceed to radiology, biochemistry and microbiology, the more conventional methods of investigation, before carrying out the more complex ones which may only be available in very special, if not unique, centres.

It is doubtful whether techniques such as fibre-optic bronchoscopy can be learnt from books, and much of the detail of that chapter is better learnt in the endoscopy room.

The chapter on radioisotope imaging by Dr Fazio is excellent and, as these techniques become more readily available, the choice of which type of method for ventilation scans is of considerable importance. It is hoped that the supply of radioactive krypton will be more reliable. If not, aerosol techniques as described will probably have to be used.

Dr P.D.B. Davies' chapter on systemic disease and their complications is an excellent review of the effect on the lungs caused by generalised disease such as immunological deficiencies, connective tissue disorders etc. and, as does the chapter on occupational lung disease, gives examples of how the clinical investigations described in the previous chapters can best be applied.

Many of the subjects amplified in this book, for example the chapters on 'Bronchial Challenge' by Dr Pain and the one on 'The Nose' by Dr Mygind, Dr Borum and Dr Pedersen, extend beyond the normal text book and are particularly valuable.

This book should be read by all those interested in recent advances in thoracic medicine. It can be thoroughly recommended.

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Emergencies in the Home

Articles published in the British Medical Journal. Pp. 112, illustrated. British Medical Association, London, 1982. £5.00.

The 20 articles contained in this little book were written by general practitioners, who acknowledge the assistance of specialists in the subjects concerned, and were published in the British Medical Journal. They deal with organization and equipment as well as a dozen or so medical emergencies and half a dozen conditions caused by accidents. They are clear and contain a good deal of sensible, practical advice that will be of value to students and trainees in

general practice, junior casualty officers and those thinking of setting up an outdoor emergency service.

One or two points of detail deserve mention. The statement that a fracture of the shaft of the femur can lead to the loss of 'as much as 1 litre' of blood presumably refers to the early loss; the total loss may be several times that amount. The description of Heimlich's manoeuvre is adequate and to one that has not always succeeded in attempts to intubate the trachea in hospital, the statement on page 78 that all doctors should be capable of laryngoscopic intubation reads strangely; however, a more realistic note is struck a few pages later. A particularly noteworthy error is the attribution to Pooh Bear of the remark about accidents that was made by Eeyore, and it is sad to see that one that chose his words with care was so sadly misquoted.

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The Emergency Book. How to Handle an Emergency and Save a Life!

By BRADLEY SMITH and GUS STEVENS. Pp. 137, illustrated. Penguin Books, London, 1982. £2.50.

The 11 articles are written for the layman with little or no knowledge of first aid and include suggestions for useful first aid equipment. Each subject is first introduced in a chatty sort of way that may appeal to the interested public, but is unnecessarily wordy. The steps to be taken are then set out as a series of tables, with illustrations that are posed photographs and mostly helpful. The instructions are clear.

The chapters on heart attack, choking and drowning are sound and sensible, but it takes a knowledgeable and judicious medical person to reduce the subject of shock to comprehensive simplicity that is of practical value. What the layman needs to know is there, but could be much more succinctly expressed. Poisoning and overdoses of drugs are dealt with in separate chapters and tend to comprehensiveness rather than the essentials. The section on 'accidents and injuries' include fractures, wounds and bleeding. It concentrates too much on makeshift splintage of fractures when what is usually required by the patient is comfortable support. One may wonder whether the use of pressure points and tourniquets has any place in such a book. It is not clear what sort of conditions the authors have in mind but they include a certain amount of continuing care. In the case of burns, if areas burned are to be mentioned, an illustration of the way of estimating them should be included. In the section on sudden illness and other emergencies it could have been mentioned that epileptics and diabetics know far more about their condition than the anxious (and the over-confident) first-aider. The section on childbirth would need to be read and re-read from time to time, but even then might leave the first aider in doubt about the choice of posture for the mother and the dilemma of urgent need to divide a strangling umbilical cord and the use of sterile scissors.

There have been better books on this ever-popular subject.

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Malignant Diseases of the Vulva

By STANLEY WAY assisted by DAVID GUTHRIE and PETER PHILIPS. Pp. 83, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh and London, 1982. £9.95.

Mr. Stanley Way made his area of the North of England a Mecca for gynaecologists. He now publishes details of his formidable personal series of vulval malignancies; 642, of which, as in other series, about 90% were squamous cell carcinomata.

References to the literature are scanty throughout and the sections on the historical background and possible aetiological factors and pathology are slight. Of the book's 83 pages, about 25 are devoted to