Books received

Alder Hey Book of Children's Doses. 4th edn. Pp. 65. Pharmacy Office, Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Eaton Road, Liverpool L12 2AP, 1982. U.K. single copies 95p incl. post and packing, U.K. 10 or more copies 85p incl. post and packing, overseas 80p incl. packing, postage extra.

The Conduction System of the Heart. By M. J. DAVIES, R. H. ANDERSON and A. E. BECKER. Pp. x+337, illustrated. Butter-

worths, London, Boston, Durban, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington, 1983. £40.00.

Multiple Choice Questions in Imaging Sciences. By DAVID FINLAY, JONATHAN BERRY and GEOFFREY BELL. Pp. 150. Baillière Tindall, London, 1983. £4.95.

Book reviews

Clinical Urology Illustrated

By R. B. BROWN. Pp. xi+401, illustrated. MTP Press, Lancaster, 1982. £24.95.

In the preface to this handsome book, the first clinical urological text to be written by an Australian, the author suggests that urology is not given an adequate place in the curriculum of many Medical Schools. Thus this book is written for the medical student and urologist in training, presumably with the aim of presenting an uncluttered, but comprehensive view of clinical urological problems, enhanced by clear illustrations.

Trained urologists must be impressed by the thoroughness with which the author has covered his field, although the information is presented in such a condensed form that a tyro may at times find the text indigestible. Throughout the book, discussion is sacrificed for brevity, resulting in an impression of dogmatism. This is a pity if the book is primarily designed for students, in whom one presumably wishes to stimulate a questioning approach to clinical problems. Certainly a British urologist may not agree with all the views expressed, many of which have a decidedly transatlantic flavour. Some subjects, such as transplantation and urethrotomy gain only a passing mention and the lithotrite, so beloved of generations of urologists, does not appear. Nevertheless, the text is peppered with snippets of good, practical advice which more than make up for the deficiencies mentioned. One of the strengths of the book lies in the beautiful line drawings and the clarity of the layout. The plates of the X-rays are less satisfactory and some times it is difficult to see what they are meant to show. There are good reproductions of CAT scans and ultrasound studies, although students not versed in the interpretation of the images produced by these techniques may find the legends to the plates inadequate. The references are well chosen, there are useful suggestions on further reading and there is an excellent index.

R. J. MORGAN,
The Royal Free and
Whittington Hospitals.

Alcohol Problems. ABC of Alcohol. Alcohol and Alcoholism

Articles from the British Medical Journal. Pp. 59, illustrated. British Medical Association, London, 1982. £5.00.

This excellent book divided into two very different parts. The first is a sort of comic book, easy to read but packed with useful facts, well-illustrated, and exactly right for discussion groups. Parts of it would be useful as resource material which would be particularly appropriate for mixed groups of vocational trainees during both the hospital and general practice phase of their training. An enormous amount of time and money is wasted by inappropriate referral, investigation, and treatment of patients whose central problem is alcohol dependence. Discussion of this material would help to improve

matters in this respect, and experienced consultants and GPs with an interest in the subject could introduce the necessary compassion and get rid of some of the punitive attitudes so commonly found.

The second section of articles by Richard Smith are a bonus. They are all well worth reading and excellently referenced. Far more research is needed in this subject, above all in general practice where the cases really are. The references in these articles are a reliable guide to what has already been done.

Every postgraduate centre should have several copies.

JULIAN TUDOR HART,
Afan Valley Group Practice,
Glyncorrwg Health Centre,
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100 case histories for the MRCP

By DAVID J. SPALTON, PETER S. SEVER, PETER DORRINGTON WARD. 2nd edn., revised by John Armitstead and Michael Greenstone. Pp. 200. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1982. £3.95.

Published material designed to assist candidates sitting postgraduate diploma examinations abounds, although not all of it is of high quality. Nevertheless, the demand for such material is great and authors therefore have an obligation to produce carefully written, well-presented and, above all, genuinely helpful texts that will truly test candidates' skills and knowledge. This book passes on all counts. The first edition was published in 1976 and proved very popular. This edition has been carefully revised and thoroughly updated; many new case histories have been added. All are convincing, are said to be authentic (although one wonders how the Eskimo who suffered on unfortunate experience following a visit to a Winnipeg brothel came to the attention of the authors), are well written and are suitably 'grey'. Some histories contain a good deal of background 'noise', but medicine is like this—and so is the 'written' portion of the Part II MRCP (UK) examination. Many histories contain data for interpretation. Inevitably clues are sometimes given in the histories. A woman of 68 who is described as a 'well-known public figure' is an immediate suspect for syphilis (or alcoholism); fortunately, she left hospital with her character and her reputation unblemished. Some cases are briefer and simpler than others but all combine originality and clinical common sense. A number of the histories are gems. The authors clearly have a sense of humour (and sometimes of mischief), as well as a flair for producing good material. In general, the distracting statements and red herrings are good and the histories are suitably concise. One must read through each case carefully and note every statement and observation in order to avoid falling into the traps that nearly all contain—these are skilfully prepared, well disguised and sometimes quite ingenious. On reading the authors'