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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 of 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*, *Biological Abstracts*.

EDITORIAL MATTERS

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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,
West Glamorgan,
Wales SA13 3DP.

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'

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All references should be brought together at the end of the paper in alphabetical order giving (a) name(s) of all the author(s) "*et al.*" not acceptable here; (b) year of publication in parentheses; (c) title of paper in its original form; (d) title of journal in full, underlined; (e) volume number, underlined; number of first page of article. References to books and monographs should include (a) name(s) and initials of all author(s) or editor(s); year of publication in parentheses, (b) title, underlined; (c) edition; (d) page referred to; (e) publisher; (f) place. Authors should ensure that the listed references correspond exactly to those in the text. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of their references.

Standard usage. The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* is used as a reference for all spelling and hyphenation. Verbs which contain the suffix *-ize* (*-ise*) and their derivatives should be spelt with the *z*. Statistics and measurements should always be given in figures, i.e. 10 min, 20 hr, 5 ml, except where the number begins the sentence. SI units should be used wherever possible.

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Postgraduate Medical Journal

VOLUME 59

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JUNE 1983

Review article

Adverse ocular reactions to drugs

M. A. SPITERI AND D. G. JAMES 343

Papers

Changes in blood pressure and renal function after parathyroidectomy in primary hyperparathyroidism

D. B. JONES, J. HENRY JONES, H. J. LLOYD, P. A. LUCAS, W. E. WILKINS AND D. A. WALKER 350

Ventricular fibrillation and initial plasma potassium in acute myocardial infarction

RODERIC D. THOMAS 354

The clinical pattern of bronchial asthma in General Hospital, Kandy (Sri Lanka)

R. JEYRAJAH AND M. D. N. WICKRAMASINGHE 357

Simplified intravenous nutrition using Intralipid-based mixtures in patients with serious gastrointestinal disease

W. R. BURNHAM, C. E. KNOTT, J. A. COOK AND M. J. S. LANGMAN 360

The treatment of quinine poisoning with charcoal haemoperfusion

MICHAEL D. L. MORGAN, DAVID J. RAINFORD, CHARLES D. PUSEY, A. M. ROBINS-CHERRY AND J. G. HENRY 365

Clinical reports

Gold-induced lung disease

JUDITH HEYD AND ARI SIMMERAN 368

Ectopic ACTH-producing lung cancer presenting with prostatic metastasis

H. M. SMEDLEY, C. BROWN AND A. TURNER 371

Suppression of prolonged fever during treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis: importance of using twice versus single daily dose of prednisolone

K. F. CHUNG AND P. D. SNASHALL 373

Superior mesenteric artery syndrome

PETER A. JONES AND C. WASTELL 376

Haemoperitoneum from benign ileal leiomyoma

D. GORDON TASKER 380

Reno-vascular disease in polycythaemia rubra vera

BEVERLEY BIGGS AND J. L. ANDERTON 382

Metastatic renal carcinoma presenting with profuse haemorrhage at cardiac surgery

A. J. WOOD, J. R. WOOD, B. CORRIN AND M. PANETH 384

Splenic abscess: successful non-surgical therapy

O. M. P. JOLOBE AND S. C. MELNICK 386

Radiculomyelopathy associated with herpes simplex genitalis treated with adenosine arabinoside

CLIVE E. HANDLER, G. D. PERKIN, R. FRAY AND J. WOJNARSKI 388

Malignant melanoma of the gallbladder

J. B. ANDERSON, R. G. HUGHES AND R. C. N. WILLIAMSON 390

A case of vesical leiomyoma and acute urinary obstruction

M. E. FOSTER AND R. W. M. REES 392

Vaginal vein thrombosis in pregnancy

S. GITSTEIN, S. BALLAS AND M. R. PEYSER 394

An unusual late sequel to hysterectomy

YANCU HERTZANU AND JULIUS HURWITZ 396

Acute sacral epidural abscess following local anaesthetic injection

M. H. A. RUSTIN, M. D. FLYNN AND E. N. COOMES 399

Books received: book reviews

401