

Books received

Annual Review of Public Health. Volume 4, 1983. Edited by LESTER BRESLOW, JONATHAN E. FIELDING, Associate Editor; LESTER B. LAVE, Associate Editor. Pp. 424, illustrated. Annual Reviews Inc., 4139 El Camino Way, Palo Alto, California 94306, U.S.A., 1983. \$27.00 (U.S.A.), \$30.00 (elsewhere), prices include postage and handling.

The Basic Neurology of Speech and Language. By MICHAEL L. E. ESPIR and F. CLIFFORD ROSE. 3rd edn. Pp. ix + 213, illustrated. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford, London, Edinburgh, Melbourne, Boston, 1983. £9.50.

Cardiovascular Disease. Integrated Clinical Science Series. Edited by JOHN R. HAMPTON. Pp. xi + 276, illustrated. William Heinemann Medical Books, London, 1983. £2.75.

Joseph Black, 1728-1799: a Commemorative Symposium. Papers presented at a Symposium held in the Royal Scottish Museum on 4 November 1978 in association with The Scottish Society of the History of Medicine, together with a Survey of Manuscript Notes of Joseph Black's Lectures on Chemistry. Edited by A. D. C. SIMPSON.

Pp. viii + 69, illustrated. The Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, 1982. £4.00 (plus 50p postage and packing in U.K. Overseas rates on application).

A Laboratory Guide to Clinical Diagnosis. By R. D. EASTHAM. 5th edn. Pp. xi + 367. Wright, PSG, Bristol, London, Boston, 1983. £10.75.

Lecture Notes on Epidemiology and Community Medicine. By R. D. T. FARMER and D. L. MILLER. 2nd edn. Pp. viii + 214, illustrated. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford, London, Edinburgh, Boston, Melbourne, 1983. £6.80.

Mnemonics, Rhetoric and Poetics for Medics. By ROBERT L. BLOOMFIELD and E. TED CHANDLER. Pp. 222, illustrated. Harbinger Press, Box 17201, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27106, U.S.A., 1982. \$9.50.

Noninvasive Methods in Atherosclerosis Research. Atherosclerosis Reviews. Edited by RUTH JOHNSON HEGYELI. Vol. 10. Pp. xiv + 200, illustrated, Raven Press, New York, 1983. \$49.00.

Book reviews

Antimicrobial Chemotherapy

Edited by DAVID GREENWOOD. Baillière's Concise Medical Textbooks. pp. 323, illustrated. Baillière Tindall, London, 1983. £6.95.

The students at the University of Nottingham Medical School are indeed fortunate to be taught by the formidable team which David Greenwood has harnessed in this useful, concise textbook on antimicrobial chemotherapy. The subject matter is divided into five parts, covering general properties, laboratory aspects, resistance, general principles and the therapeutic use of antimicrobial agents. The book is further sub-divided into 29 sections each of which is concise and self-contained.

The book is illustrated with 35 tables and 37 figures; three of the figures are of poor quality black and white photographs but these detract little from the overall value of the book. Each section varies in context although the styles of the different writers have been moulded to maintain continuity. The text is easy to read and is not cluttered with references although the student is given recommendations for further reading at the end.

In terms of detail, the student will find few contentious points although it is a mark of the times that little is said about acyclovir and hepatitis B vaccine such is the speed of new innovations and the time taken to publish even modest works. It would seem that even in the last year, clinicians are casting doubts on the therapeutic value of chloramphenicol combined with gentamicin in the treatment of neonatal meningitis.

It seems incongruous that one part or section of any book should be singled out, but I found the general principles of use of antimicrobial agents especially useful and in particular would recommend the section on adverse reactions to antibiotics. Nevertheless, the colourful descriptions and sense of humour portrayed by the editor will not be lost on the students but I hope the students will attend the practical courses as well as reading the results of their

mentors' art. At £6.95, this book is good value for all medical students.

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Drugs and Pregnancy. Human Teratogenesis and Related Problems

Edited by D. F. HAWKINS. Pp. 243. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne and New York, 1983. £10.00.

This book is based on a symposium held at the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in 1980. Although the book is relatively short, it covers a wide range of topics. The first section deals with the concepts of teratogenesis, inappropriateness of animal testing, placental transfer of drugs and the general principles of prescribing in pregnancy. The second section considers therapeutics in normal and abnormal pregnancy and selected specific topics such as the use of corticosteroids and antibiotics, the effects of drugs of abuse, the treatment of premature labour, neonatal jaundice and breast feeding. Throughout the book, the emphasis has been to give a balanced viewpoint on the possible risks and benefits of drug therapy in pregnancy, in contrast to the almost universal manufacturer's disclaimer "safety in pregnancy has not been evaluated".

There are some curious idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies. In considering control of heparin treatment, heparin blood levels are dismissed as unpredictably unreliable and bedside estimation of the clotting time is recommended instead. This is surely even more unreliable, and very few haematologists would endorse this opinion. In the chapter on placental transfer, all antibiotics except penicillin are cited as potential teratogens. The conclusion to the chapter devoted to antibiotic therapy states that the antibiotics used routinely may be considered fairly safe for the foetus. I would agree with the latter opinion.

However, in general I would recommend this book to the