

'neither reliable nor important' (an educated finger on the carotid can usually differentiate aortic sclerosis and stenosis); systolic murmurs are 'unlikely to be important' if they vary with posture, are not associated with symptoms or cardiomegaly and if the chest X-ray is normal (what about *maladie de Roger*, mitral valve prolapse and bicuspid aortic valve?).

The pictures are excellent and the price reasonable. Many students will learn from this book but it lacks references and they will need a more traditional text to look things up.

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#### Diagnosis and Management of Acute Poisoning. Diagnosis and Management Series

By ALEXANDER T. PROUDFOOT. Pp. viii + 237. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford, London, Edinburgh, Boston, Melbourne, 1982. £7.50.

*Diagnosis and Management of Acute Poisoning* admirably fulfils the objective of its author in giving highly practical help to junior doctors who are dealing with a poisoning problem. Having classified the types of poisoning; Dr Proudfoot then deals thoroughly with diagnosis and treatment. At the end of each section the salient points are concisely emphasized and these summaries alone would be of great help to the young medical officer who may have to make decisions quickly and alone. The last and largest section of the book lists in alphabetical order many poisonous and potentially poisonous agents. Help with diagnosis and treatment for specific situations is readily available here. The compact book also contains information about the Poison Service in the U.K. and a useful appendix relating to the slang of addicts.

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#### Diagnosis and Management of Renal and Urinary Diseases. Diagnosis and Management Series

By J. MICHAEL BOULTON-JONES, J. DOUGLAS BRIGGS and TIMOTHY B. HARGREAVE. Pp. vii + 309, illustrated. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford, London Edinburgh, Boston, Melbourne, 1982. £10.50.

This book sets out to provide a concise account of the clinical features and management of disorders of the kidney and urinary tract. It is aimed at clinicians working in or out of hospitals and at the MRCP candidate.

The subject is divided into 20 chapters dealing with anatomy and physiology, urinary tract investigations, primary renal disorders and the kidney in systemic diseases, renal failure and renal replacement therapy. The last seven chapters provide a useful synopsis of urological disorders and their management. Each chapter concludes with a list of points of emphasis.

In a book of such wide scope and small size, the authors need to be dogmatic and although their opinions are usually well-placed there are inevitably a few points of view with which other nephrologists would disagree. For example, it is not true to say that membranous nephropathy does not recur in transplanted kidneys.

The Scottish origin of the book is betrayed by the expression 'outwith this range' but the selection criteria for dialysis which follow reflect the generally gloomy provision throughout the U.K. and would not be accepted in most other Western countries.

There are few important omissions, although it is surprising to see no mention of casts in a detailed section on examination and microscopy of urine.

Some references for further reading would have been valuable, especially in the chapters on physiology, glomerulopathies and drugs.

On the whole it can be said that the authors have achieved their

objectives. This is a readable book providing a comprehensive introduction to clinical aspects of renal and urinary tract disorders. There is an excellent chapter on chronic renal failure and the chapter on primary glomerulopathies provides a helpful outline of an often confusing subject. This book can be warmly recommended to candidates revising for higher examinations and provides a useful background for the practising general physician and even the embryo specialist.

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#### Pediatrics

Edited by HAROLD M. MAURER. Pp. xvii + 1077, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, New York, Edinburgh, London and Melbourne, 1983. £28.00.

This new textbook of paediatrics is modestly designated as 'intermediate' in size by its editor but nevertheless runs to over 1,000 pages. In common with many comparable editions it is a multiply authored work of which all but five of the 49 contributors are affiliated to the Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. It is intended to focus on important and common problems for the medical student, house officer and practitioner (in the American sense). The list of chapters is comprehensive with sections on the disorders of each major system. In keeping with the present day concept of the subject, whole chapters are also devoted to adolescent health, primary care, social and emotional problems and the prevention of injury. The book is completed by three useful sections on paediatric radiology, drug therapy and normal laboratory values. The text is reasonably well written, fully illustrated with figures and diagrams and referenced with commendably short lists at the end of each chapter. There are however some irritating features. Is it really logical to consider the whole of growth and development before the newly born? How many paediatricians really consider acute glaucoma, Caffey's disease and scurvy in the differential diagnosis of infantile colic? Moreover, should paediatric dermatology, although extremely well-written and illustrated, command 117 pages when the whole of paediatric surgery is dismissed in 30? Why is there such extensive cover of Group A streptococcal disease whereas Group B is scarcely mentioned in the text and not at all in the index.

It is difficult to believe that this book will prove to be a serious rival for the larger more comprehensive texts intended for the aspiring or practising paediatrician. It does however provide a readable and comprehensive overview of the subject for those who require something more than is offered by the short, cryptic handbook. It is therefore commended to medical graduates in disciplines other than paediatrics, medical students and nurses as a useful addition to their personal or institutional libraries.

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#### Postgraduate Medicine

By I. J. T. DAVIES. 4th edn. Pp. x + 563, illustrated. Lloyd-Luke (Medical Books) Ltd., London, 1983. £17.00.

There is no doubt that this is an extremely useful and relatively cheap book. The intentions of authors do not always match up with needs of readers, but the ambitious aim to provide a readable text book has, I think, been achieved. I have used it to revise and update subjects in which I am rusty and have scrutinised areas which I think I know something about. I cannot judge the former, but with regard to the latter I think fair and balanced presentations are given. Perhaps it does not work for the small print requirements of jobbing physicians: I could not find anything on orf which we occasionally see in Devon and there was nothing on hyperostosis frontalis interna—a common and ill-understood condition. To be fair, Cecil's textbook did not deal with these diseases either! Both I and my

junior staff (and the nurses) refer to the book frequently on the ward. I like the biographical details about the eponyms, a taste acquired from Hamilton Bailey's *Emergency Surgery*. The selected references at the end of each chapter are well chosen and up-to-date. There will always be a need for general physicians and books like this will make their task easier. The author is to be complimented on providing a valuable and sensible guide for their work. It should be a must for MRCP candidates.

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#### Psychology and Medical Care

By G. KENT and M. DALGLEISH. Pp. xii + 356, illustrated. Van Nostrand Reinhold (UK) Co Ltd, Wokingham, 1983. £14.95 cloth, £6.95 paper.

This introduction to psychology is aimed at two possible groups of readers; undergraduate medical students and postgraduates training in psychiatry or general practice. It has three sections, the first introducing six basic psychological processes, the second considering four aspects of human development and the final section dealing with doctor-patient communication under the headings 'Pain, placebos and drug dependence', 'The consultation' and 'Compliance'.

The choice of titles and sections is somewhat idiosyncratic, conforming neither to the usual areas of psychology nor to aspects of health, illness and medical practice. Even the section on human

development avoids the obvious developmental sequence, choosing instead 'Early Social Relationships', 'Sexuality', 'Family Dynamics' and 'Adjustment to Life Changes'. Topics are omitted which many undergraduate courses would wish to include, particularly topics dealing with the biological basis of behaviour such as emotion and sleep. Since this is the area which integrates most easily with other courses the student is taking concurrently, the omission may increase the student's difficulties with the subject and restrict teaching/learning opportunities. As a result, the book will be more difficult to use as a course book than other recently published books. Medical students criticise these books for being wordy and woolly and Kent and Dalgleish's book would certainly receive the same criticisms.

On the other hand, compared with other recent texts, it is particularly strong on social and psychotherapeutic aspects of psychology. It might therefore be particularly appropriate for those specializing in general practice or psychiatry. Topics are covered in a thoughtful, critical manner, including presentation of research findings in enough detail for students to understand the basic methodology and evaluate the evidence. The level of discussion is certainly appropriate for postgraduate readers.

The book can therefore be recommended as an introduction to psychology as it relates to medical care with a caution about the emphasis toward the interpersonal and the deficiencies on the biological aspects of psychology.

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## Letter to the Editor

December 19th, 1983

### Starch-free surgeons' glove

Sir,

The interesting paper by Michowitz and Stavorovsky and Ilie (*Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 1983, **59**, 593) 'Granulomatous peritonitis caused by glove starch' included the remark 'glove manufacturers have as yet failed to formulate a practical method of glove production excluding starch powder'.

Your readers may be interested to know that since this paper was submitted, LRC Products Ltd have indeed developed a starch-free surgeons' glove which has received DHSS approval. This is coated with a hydrogel polymer which is bonded to the inside of the glove and acts as a lubricating surface, thus removing the need for starch powder.

Mr Malcolm Lennox (*Surgery Today*, October 1983, p. 6) reported 'the starch-free glove was linked with more than ten-fold reduction in hand bacterial count in surgeons . . . and caused no adhesions between organs in rat experiments'.

The new Biogel glove should also offer significant savings in time and money by doing away with the current need to wash gloves thoroughly with sterile water before surgery in order to assist in the removal of starch.

Yours faithfully,  
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The Editor welcomes brief letters providing follow-up reports, or comments on papers and clinical reports in the Journal.