

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,  
P. NICHOLAS

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