Books received


Book reviews

Aids to Postgraduate Medicine

This pocket-sized book is an established favourite with M.R.C.P. candidates and rightly so, since it presents a large volume of essential knowledge in a style that is easy to assimilate. There are omissions, of course, but these are as much a result of the size of the book as the author's intention to be brief. There is nothing in the book that is redundant, even the title will suggest a disease to any doctor short of diagnostic ideas.

I should not forget my brief which is to review critically and not wallow in praise. My chief complaint is with the opening section which discusses the M.R.C.P. examination. It is a direct copy from the 3rd edn. with the inclusion of the latest entrance requirements set by the Royal College. No account has been taken of the addition of Basic Sciences to Part I, and in Part II, I would think that any candidate seeing only three short cases would undoubtedly fail. The Royal College makes a point of the importance of history taking, not the opposite as Dr Burton suggests.

There are two additional chapters in the main part of the book: Venereology and Pyrexia and Hypothermia. The latter is outstanding for its brevity and the former, notable for one omission, viz. AIDS. I still find the chapter on Rheumatology confusing (no classification of arthropathies) and that on Renal Disease enlightening. One final moan, sarcoidosis seems to have disappeared from the book. There are fewer changes than I expected, but this reflects, I am sure, the good quality of the last edition. I would still strongly recommend Aids to Postgraduate Medicine to all doctors as an aide-memoire.

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Atlas of Bronchitis

In the preface to this atlas it is stated that the book attempts to 'improve our understanding' of the clinical, pathophysiological and pathological features of bronchitis. For someone new to the subject, the attractive illustrations dramatized by imaginative colouring and artistic licence will no doubt draw him to the useful information in the text. Scanning electron microscope photographs are tinted green, and in one three-dimensional drawing based on electron microscopy, the cilia can be seen apparently blowing away from the epithelial cells in acute bronchitis. Anything that makes people curious enough to read in this television age is acceptable, and the text is scientifically sound. However, someone who already knows something about bronchitis and wishes to improve his understanding at a postgraduate level will be disappointed by the brevity of the list of references at the end of the book, and by the absence of text references to them. Some key references in the subject are not mentioned anywhere. There are also some typographical errors that