

Book Reviews

Endocrine Diagnosis: Clinical and Laboratory Approach, edited by William F. Streck and Dean H. Lockwood. Pp. xii + 330, illustrated. Little, Brown, Boston, Toronto, 1983. £19.80.

This is very much an American text and I do not commend its approach to the British reader. The authors are in general not fully in touch with modern endocrine concepts. Many faults could be cited, to list but a few: p. 17: Acromegaly is not listed in Table 2-1 as a cause of hypopituitarism. p. 22: Chlorpromazine is not in routine use in the diagnosis of hyperprolactinaemia. p. 35: Cardiomyopathy is omitted from the list of complications of acromegaly. p. 43: Insulin tolerance test for GH deficiency – no mention is made of sex hormone priming. p. 54: The author confuses the relationship between LATS and LATS-P and stresses the failure of suppressibility of thyroidal radioiodine uptake in Graves' disease when this finding is also observed in other causes of thyroid autonomy. The list of aetiologies of hyperthyroidism is very abbreviated. p. 62: Comments on free thyroxine are of little help to the student. p. 235: Testicular size – the length only is given whereas volume measurement is the rule.

These few items highlight the many defects of this text which is expensive and not worthwhile certainly for the clinically orientated British reader.

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Psychological Influences and Illness: Hypnosis and Medicine. Based on a Symposium held at the Cavendish Conference Centre, London, on 1 September 1982 and sponsored by the Section of Medical and Dental Hypnosis of the Royal Society of Medicine, edited by David Waxman. Pp. x + 83, illustrated. Royal Society of Medicine, Macmillan, 1984. £20.00.

This slim volume consists of six papers written – with one exception – by clinicians: an anaesthetist, a chest physician, a psychiatrist and two obstetricians. The exceptions is Professor E. Hilgard, a psychologist at Stanford, whose laboratory approach demonstrates very clearly that it is possible to study scientifically the effects of hypnosis on experimentally – induced pain.

Lum too uses exact methods to record the changes in respiration, heart rate and skin resistance levels during hypnotic trances, but the other contributors use less exact methods to assess the results of hypnotherapy.

Finer describes how he treats patients with chronic pain syndrome and Oystagh illustrates his review of sexual problems with five case histories where hypnotherapy was associated with improvement in impotence or frigidity. Fuchs regards hypnotism as the treatment of choice in hyperemesis gravidarum and gives data on a series of patients with this condition which support his view; there are however no controls. Snaith reviews the detection and management of anxiety (including the role of hypnotherapy).

The whole volume gives a realistic idea of the state of the art and can be recommended as an up to date brief introduction to the relevance of hypnotism to medical practice.

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Pocket Examiner in Surgery, John Northover and Tom Treasure, with contributions from Matthew Fletcher, John Dixon, Michael Bridger, Paul Hunter and Kenneth Lindsay. Pp. xiii + 236. Pitman, London, 1984. £4.95.

The book is one of a series of 'pocket examiner' books recently introduced by Pitman. In this volume surgery is presented in an oral question and answer form in order to prepare the candidate for the oral examination. The 'viva' often causes much anxiety and the technique of answering questions is not acquired by reading standard text-books.

The first 52 pages of this book consists of 1,000 questions grouped under 18 sub-headings such as 'the acute abdomen' and 'lumps and bumps'. The remaining 184 pages contain answers to the questions. The range of subjects covered is very comprehensive and the two editors, John Northover and Tom Treasure, have had help from five other contributors, experts in their specialty.

This book is reasonably priced and as the title suggests narrow enough to slip into a pocket. The volume could be used either to complement textbook revision or better still as a basis for quiz-type group revision. This small book, packed with detailed but