succinct surgical information, provides an innovatory method of revision and can be confidently recommended as undergraduate reading. For the postgraduate final FRCS candidate the book should be essential reading. One dares to suggest that even the examiners could benefit from its perusal.

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A Photographic Quiz in Medicine, Philip Ebdon, Alan Peiris and Michael J. Dew. Pp. 216, illustrated. Lloyd-Luke (Medical Books), London, 1984. £9.00.

The authors and their colleagues from Cardiff are to be congratulated on producing an excellent little book containing high quality illustrations of physical signs, X-rays, simple echocardiograms and histology in a format similar to the 2nd part MRCP examination. Candidates would be well advised to browse through its pages on the eve of the written section!

Undergraduate students will see clear photographs of common and not so common physical signs and will find the specimen answers provided concise and informative. The presentation as a clinical quiz has appeal and may stimulate the reader to consult the standard textbooks. This enjoyable volume will surely find a place in most libraries.

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Medical Pharmacology: Principles and Concepts, Eleventh Edition, Andres Goth. Pp. xii + 815, Illustrated. C.V. Mosby, St Louis, Toronto, 1984. £26.00.

This is the 11th edition of a well known text on pharmacology. In the Preface the author claims it is essentially a new book in which 20 chapters (out of 64) have been completely rewritten or significantly revised. The book sets out to cover medical pharmacology from the basic principles and mechanisms of drug action through clinical pharmacology to therapeutics and practical prescribing. I am not entirely certain it succeeds in its objectives. Some areas of

basic pharmacology are dealt with fairly superficially and more in an historical context. In the areas of clinical pharmacology and therapeutics the volume reflects its North American origins. This book is unlikely to be of use to senior medical students or physicians because the drugs named and the orientation of the text is entirely directed to the Foods and Drug Administration and products available in the United States of America. This contributes to the rather out of date look to some chapters. For example, there is no mention of the newer non-sedating antihistamines in Chapter 20. These products are now available over the counter in Britain. Chapters on anti-anginal drugs and antihypertensive drugs appear out of date or at least out of touch with current practice. Important new developments of therapy such as converting enzyme inhibitors and calcium antagonists receive little or no comment. For £26 the limp bound edition appeared expensive. This is not a detailed authoritative reference source but is too big to serve as a pocket reference book. I think it is unlikely to be of use to undergraduate or postgraduate medical students outside the United States.

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Managing Low Back Pain, W.H. Kirkaldy-Willis. Pp. xii + 260, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, New York, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, 1983. £32.00.

Despite the emphasis in the title on management of back pain in this volume there is careful attention to differential diagnosis of causes of back pain and the pathology and pathogenesis of degenerative disorders of the spine. The author describes three phases of the degenerative process which are dysfunction (decreased movement), an unstable phase (increased abnormal movement) and finally a stabilization phase. He uses this concept as the basis of the pathological changes and to form the foundations for determining the diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. In addition careful attention is paid to psychological aspects of this disorder and to psychological forms of treatment. The whole volume is beautifully illustrated. In particular there are superb photographs of pathological specimens.

This book is written mainly for orthopaedic surgeons but will be of considerable value for all who deal with back pain problems. Mr Kirkaldy-Willis is to be congratulated for producing a superb volume which