

## Book Reviews

**Annual Review of Immunology**, Vol. 2, edited by William E. Paul, C. Garrison Fathman, Henry Metzger. Pp. 560, illustrated. Annual Reviews, Palo Alto, California, 1984. \$27.00 (U.S.A.), \$30.00 (elsewhere). Prices include postage and handling.

Dr John Humphrey introduces this series of reviews with an amusing autobiographical essay entitled 'Serendipity in Immunology'. The remaining 19 chapters document the current status of all the major research areas of immunology ranging from the well established topics of complement and antigenicity to the newer interests in interleukins and gene transfection.

The overall standard of the contributions is high, but some deserve particular attention. Schlossman and co-workers derive the first unifying model of the T cell antigen receptor. Snyderman discusses the nature of the leucocyte chemoattractant receptor and the biochemical basis of the transduction of the receptor signal to chemotactic, oxidative and secretory responses. In another chapter, interleukin 2 (IL2) and its receptor are characterized and attention is drawn to the possible relevance of these to T cell malignancies. A major new review of natural killer (NK) cell research is given by Herberman and a chapter on macrophage activation explores a broader definition of the concept of 'activation' by considering the up- and down-regulation of various membrane and intracellular capacities.

The proposed role of the eosinophil in containing inflammation following immediate type hypersensitivity reactions is questioned by new evidence in man and guinea pigs; an active role for this cell in the bronchial damage of asthma is suggested. A section dealing with complement highlights the *in vivo* importance of erythrocyte complement receptors in phagocytosis and describes the complex characteristics of complement activation by different bacteria.

This book will be of particular interest to those embarking upon specialist laboratory based research in immunology.

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**Clinical Manual of Health Assessment**, Second edition. Arden C. Bowers & June M. Thompson. Pp. vii + 644, illustrated. C.V. Mosby, St Louis, Toronto, Princeton, 1984. £24.00.

In the attic, among my memorabilia, there must be a white coat. It is my first, carefully preserved, purchased in the meat market for about 10 shillings the day I became a clinical student. I would have stopped wearing it and bought a new one, not because it needed cleaning (which I expect it did) but because the pockets were torn. Without a pocket I could not go on to the wards because it would have contained my copy of 'Clinical Methods' or 'Essentials of Medical Diagnosis' and without one of these, clerking a patient was impossible. They set out clearly the rules for taking a history and examining a patient systematically – with a view to making a diagnosis or the appropriate investigations where necessary.

These books and my training were orientated towards the sick patient. The Clinical Manual of Health Assessment is orientated towards the well, possibly sick, 'client'. Its emphasis is on normal findings, rather than physical sign; on the background history rather than symptom specific questions, although these are adequately covered. It also notes variations in the child and elderly subject concentrating on normal development and the natural ageing process.

It claims to be 'holistic' in its approach – by that it means that it covers all aspects of a person's health – not just those that might be related to a symptom or an unhealthy habit. It is aimed at the student, 'learning health assessment'. How suitable is it for the clinical student?

The body of the book is devoted to the assessment of each system – beginning with historical items in general and specific symptoms in particular. For each system surface anatomy is demonstrated, and almost every page is excellently illustrated. Instructions on inspection, palpation, percussion and auscultation are given – but not necessarily in that order. For instance, in the examination of the abdomen it deals with auscultation before palpation and percussion which seems odd.

Most pages are divided into three columns. The first gives the characteristic to be examined, the second the normal appearance, and the third gives deviations from the normal. These categories apply only to the text and not the photographs. I spent a few confusing minutes looking at the photograph of male distributed pubic hair in the 'deviation from normal' column, thinking it

looked pretty normal to me – before I read the legend which confirmed it was!

At the beginning of each chapter, there is a useful glossary of medical terms and a summary of the clinical objectives of examining each system. At the end there is a comprehensive list of questions on the chapter and a largely American bibliography.

It is, of course, a very American book. Its emphasis on health assessment rather than on illness detection is a development from the health check so popular in America. The use of the word client instead of 'patient' or 'subject' reminds us of the different commercial relationship between patients and their doctors in America. However, our patients are becoming more consumer orientated and the next generation of doctors and other medical workers may well regard them as 'clients'.

The chapters on child development, breast examination and the sections on changes found in the elderly are excellent. These are often areas not covered by general books on the subject, as are sex problems, which are discussed in the sections on male and female genito-urinary systems. They are preceded by the warning that anyone posing questions on sex should be prepared to follow through with intervention skills in this area. Interestingly, the male section gives 17 questions on sex problems compared with 8 in the womens' section. Perhaps this reflects the bias of the authors – who are female American nurses! My pocket books were written by eminent physicians, and there appears to be no 'physician' input into this book.

This might explain one or two omissions that I noticed. For instance, in a clear diagram of referred pain from abdominal organs there is no mention of shoulder-tip pain from the gall bladder. Likewise, in their neurological section they cover the cranial nerves very well, but their assessment of the peripheral nervous system does not refer to individual nerves, which I feel weakens this chapter.

But these criticisms are minor. Overall, the book is an excellent tutor on clinical history and examination for all students of health and illness. The main book will not fit into a white-coat pocket, but it comes with a 60-page synopsis that will. If it had been about when I was a student I would have bought it. Today it makes a useful reference book.

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**Contemporary Neurology**, edited by M.J.G. Harrison. Pp. xiii + 641, illustrated. Butterworths, London, Boston, Durban, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington, 1984. £25.00.

This book is surprisingly expensive at £25. It is fat, containing over 600 pages, but a paperback, and much of the contents has previously appeared as commissioned articles in the *British Journal of Hospital Medicine* between 1974 and early 1983. Although the Editor has grouped articles together appropriately, there is no coherent theme running through the book, nor can it be considered in any way a textbook of neurology. For example, the four articles on multiple sclerosis include one on acute optic neuritis, one on immunological aspects, one on new treatments, and one on spinal cord stimulation.

If what one wants to look up happens to be in the book, then almost invariably a careful and complete description of that particular topic is contained. It is, however, a weakness that the date of original publication is not given at the head of each article, though the date of many can be inferred from the list of references.

Despite these criticisms, this book can be considered as a useful revision source for those undertaking the examination for Membership of the Royal College of Physicians.

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**Davidson's Principles and Practice of Medicine: a Textbook for Students and Doctors**, Fourteenth edition, edited by John Macleod. Pp. x + 843, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1984. £19.50.

It is difficult for medical students, GPs and post-graduates to choose from the large number of general medical books now available. The only sensible advice is to find the most suitable one by borrowing each in turn from the library. The choice really lies between a very concise text book that is portable, preferably fitting into a white coat pocket or a large book which is exhaustive and tries to deal with every query. There is enough information to pass finals and probably MRCP in the condensed text providing every word is read and understood. The major problem with these books is that explanation is cut to a minimum and they are less likely to satisfy the student who does not