Book Reviews


In the preface of this book the editors state that despite the prevalence of acute pain, there is currently no available text providing a comprehensive review of treatment and that this volume is their response to this perceived lacuna in the existing literature. Their offering goes a long way to filling this need but just how far depends very much on the viewpoint of the individual reader.

The eleven chapters (283 pages) deal not only with the treatment of acute pain but also its measurement, the physiological mechanisms of its cause and psychological factors affecting patient response. A wealth of information is gathered together and presented, for the most part, in a manner that is easy to understand, assimilate and regurgitate for practical utilisation. Its value would have been enhanced, nonetheless, by the inclusion of a more catholic spectrum of analgesic agents, a more detailed appraisal of the treatment of cardiac and hollow viscus pain and some of the more basic nursing and physiotherapeutic procedures.

However, perfection is hard to achieve and although each reader will define his own criticisms and be able to delineate certain omissions, the editors are to be congratulated both for grasping the nettle of the concept and for assembling authors who write with authority and clarity; attributes not always found in close proximity.

This book can be recommended without hesitation not only to those whose main interest is in purveying analgesia but also to the whole spectrum of medical and nursing practitioners.

Keith Budd
Bradford Royal Infirmary,
Bradford
W. Yorks BD9 6RJ.


This latest volume in the Annual Review of Microbiology series comprises twenty-two chapters on widely disparate aspects of microbiology prefaced by a curious autobiographical overview entitled ‘Learning’. The authors are predominantly American though contributions from Canada, Finland, Holland and the UK are also included. The numerous references unfortunately do not include article titles, an annoying omission that is apparently to be rectified in Volume 40. Fundamental aspects of microbiology predominate and microbial physiology, metabolism and genetics make taxing reading for the medical microbiologist. Some of the subjects considered will be entirely foreign to the medical reader – the cyanobacteria, the thiobacilli, the barotolerant deep sea psychrophiles and the iron and manganese depositing bacteria to name a few. Thus inevitably with such a broad canvas encompassing the whole discipline of microbiology most microbiologists whatever their specific interest will only find certain chapters of the Annual Review relevant to them. For the medical reader there are useful updates on gonococcal genetics, monoclonal antibodies, Bacteroides of the human lower intestinal tract, toxic shock syndrome and the structure and mode of action of vancomycin. However, reviews of these subjects are readily obtainable elsewhere and, overall, Annual Review of Microbiology could not be recommended as a worthwhile investment for the medical microbiologist. One is left wondering for whom the book is destined and quite what purpose these reviews serve.

S. Eykyn
Department of Microbiology,
St Thomas’s Hospital Medical School,
London SE1 7EH.


There are so many developments in knowledge of the role of nutrition in the pathogenesis and management of disease processes that it is extremely valuable to have this review of the subject by a series of N. American authors under the editorship of Professors Darby, Broquist and Olson. There are twenty chapters with a considerable range in emphasis. A number of basic science topics are addressed – adverse effects of excessive consumption of amino acids (Benevenga), nutritive factors affecting bioactivation and detoxification of chemicals (Guengerich), selenium (Coombs), vitamin K (Olson), branched-chain amino acid metabolism (Harper), essential amino acids (Visek) and vitamin B12 metabolism (Inks). However, each is more than just a review of biochemical pathways; their clinical significance is always emphasised.

The increase in interest in nutritional physiology in recent years is reflected by some excellent chapters including protein and energy metabolism during lactation (Sampson), ultra trace elements (Nielsen) and fluoride (Rao). Most sections were clear but the latter would have benefited from an inclusion of the legal aspects of fluoridation of water supplies. An excellent chapter on vitamin A (Sommer) is perhaps of greatest use for those working in a developing country but the introduction to the possible clinical importance of vitamin A deficiency in immune deficiency has wider implications.

There are some practical chapters on clinical nutrition including home parenteral nutrition (Howard), food allergy (Atkins), tests for vitamin deficiency (Sauberlich), dietetic fats (Emken), the calcium, osteoporosis story (Avioli) and vitamin D metabolism (Henry). There are two chapters on comparative nutrition – that on feline nutrition (McDonald)
might seem of domestic importance only at first sight but it
gives valuable information, on lipid metabolism especially.
Similarly, a chapter on energy metabolism in different species
(Baldwin) gives some clues as to why energy requirements
and expenditure vary so much in human populations.

Andrew Tomkin
Clinical Nutrition Unit,
Department of Surgery,
University College,
London WC1F 6JJ.

Antifibrinolytic Drugs: Chemistry, Pharmacology and Clinical
Usage, Derek Ogston. Pp. xiv + 180, illustrated. John Wiley,
£15.00.

It comes as quite a surprise to the non-specialist to read, in
this very well written small textbook by Professor Ogston, of the
wide range of clinical situations in which antifibrinolytic
drugs may be of use. Despite its size, this text has brought
together a very large amount of information concerning the
pharmacology and clinical usage of this somewhat controver-
sial group of drugs. The book is divided into three sections
beginning with a well structured introduction to the fibrin-
olytic enzyme system followed by sections on the mechanism
of action, pharmacology and clinical pharmacology of the
various anti-fibrinolytic drugs available and, finally, the
section on clinical usage. The chapters on chemistry and
pharmacology of the drugs are quite detailed but have been
produced in small ‘byte’ sized pieces for ease of reference and
retention. My only criticism of this part of the book is the
limited use of explanatory diagrams. Those that are included
are, however, most helpful. In the final section, the use of
anti-fibrinolytic agents in clinical situations from subarach-
noid haemorrhage through menorrhagia to protein-losing
gastroenteropathy and possible influence on tumour growth
and metastasis, are well covered in short sub-headed sections
as in the first half of the book. The presence of an adequate
index and extensive references to the text (over 300 related to
clinical usage alone) makes this short text book a useful
addition to the shelves of all those interested in the problems
of thrombosis and anti-thrombotic therapy.

D.B. Barnett
Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics,
University of Leicester,
Leicester Royal Infirmary,
Leicester LE2 7LX.

Essentials of Nuclear Medicine, M.V. Merrick. Pp. vi + 312,
illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Mel-

Departments of Nuclear Medicine are now commonly found
in district general hospitals in UK instead of, as previously,
only in specialist centres. There has been for some time a need
for a reasonably priced comprehensive but concise guide to
current practice in this speciality which Dr Merrick’s book
satisfies admirably. Omitting much of the theoretical back-
ground, he has described basic techniques, their clinical
indications and relevance, and the significance and inter-
pretation of the images and the quantitative data.

There are chapters on the brain and CNS, lungs, liver and
spleen, heart, kidneys, skeleton, blood and RE system,
gastro-intestinal tract, endocrine system, tumours and soft
 tissues and paediatric work. The material is up to date and in
accord with current practice. Where less commonly used
procedures are described, their indication and limitations are
made clear. A bibliography for further reading is given at the
end of each chapter, most references being later than 1980
with a few going back to 1975.

There is very little to which this reviewer could take an
exception. Appendix 2 in the contents list is entitled ‘Dosage
of Radiopharmaceuticals in Children’ but actually turns out to
be a table of radiation doses to the fetus from various
procedures, which would not normally be used in pregnancy
anyway.

There is some controversy about the best way of doing
ventilation perfusion lung scan and several of these are
discussed; but if krypton 81m is available most single gamma
camera departments would prefer to do a simultaneous
ventilation-perfusion scan at one visit.

These criticisms are minor, however, and I am sure will be
corrected in subsequent editions. While there can be no
substitute for an adequate period of practical training in a
department of Nuclear Medicine, this book will serve as a
sound introduction to the speciality as well as a reference
source for clinicians.

P.M. Bretland
Whittington Hospital,
London N19 2SY.

Gynecologic Ultrasound, edited by William B. Steel and

A textbook edited by a radiologist and an obstetrician,
gynaecologist is a rare event. As every gynaecologist knows,
several radiologists are familiar with gynaecology; and, as every
radiologist knows, most gynaecologists will proceed to
laparoscopy or laparotomy anyway. On such mutual distrust
there are relations between the two been traditionally based. But
the potential ability of ultrasound, computed tomography
and interventional techniques to allow the gynaecologist to
stay his hand requires the radiologist/ultrasonographer to
understand the overall clinical picture. This book attempts to
inform both, and constantly stresses the importance of
information.

This book is well written and concise. The repetition often
found in multi-author texts has been severely discouraged by
the editors. Bibliographies are reasonably up-to-date.

The chapters on the paediatric pelvis, gestational tro-
haplastic disease, ectopic pregnancy and pelvic malignancy
contain a wealth of clinical and diagnostic detail. However,
since common things are common, I regret the omission of a
chapter on uterine fibroids. Ovarian follicle monitoring
might also have been included.

Less happily, transatlantic ‘black-on-white’ scans are
occasionally juxtaposed with those we would consider more
correct. This may be confusing for the less experienced.
