anxieties associated with anaesthesia. It is of note that contributors from the United States have been preferred to write the chapter on high-frequency ventilation.

Criticism is necessary but muted. The series is so well established that in the interests of accuracy the title should be redrafted. References are numerous and unnecessarily inflated with a list of personal communications. Many are not recent. Unfortunately the scholarship of the section on intravenous agents has been eroded by the withdrawal of many promising drugs. The fate of Althesin is referred to in a miniscule editorial note whereas the terse comment on etomidate cannot be compared with the more detailed information on cortisol inhibition found in *Clinics in Anaesthesiology*, September 1984!

The section on isoflurane purports to present its effects on the heart and circulation but the splanchnic circulation is excluded nor is there any mention of its effect on suppressing the endocrine response to surgical stimulation.

The chapter on aspiration of gastric contents is extensively researched providing excellent examination fodder. The recent confidential report into maternal mortality reiterates the view that skill and experience of the anaesthetists are of paramount importance and that antacid therapy is only an adjunct. Much of the text is taken up with the merits of various regimes some of which are complicated and expensive but there is no evidence that any of these drugs have reduced maternal mortality. When ‘the gastric acid problem is put into perspective’ there is no mention of attempting to assess a difficult intubation, awake intubation, nor of leaving a cuffed endotracheal tube *in situ* until the patient is fully conscious. The hazards of intravenous ergometrine alluded to by Michael Johnstone might also have been mentioned as a contributory factor to pulmonary oedema.

The book deserves to succeed because of the wealth of information provided by experts. However readers are becoming bewildered by the array of ‘Advances’, ‘Reviews’, ‘Clinics’, ‘Topics’, ‘Yearbooks’ and ‘Surveys’ and there will be more than a sneaking temptation not even to peruse original papers. Speed of publication is essential and this in the future will be accomplished by holding references on databases, realigning text with word processors and by automatic indexing.

Leon Kaufman
University College Hospital,
London WC1E 6AV.


Old age brings changes in the functioning of the lower urinary tract that in one way or another are appreciated by virtually everyone. The problems experienced by the elderly as a result of these changes have received scant attention from the medical profession. This book, dedicated to the subject, will be welcomed with enthusiasm.

The text has been well thought out and contains contributions on a wide variety of aspects by a number of experienced workers. The editor has contributed two well referenced and clearly written chapters describing the bladder mechanisms affected by age and analysing the current pharmacological situation. Unfortunately the anticholinergic oxybutinin did not get included but its use in this country is a very recent development.

I particularly enjoyed Stuart Stanton’s very clear description of the surgical management of female incontinence and the chapters covering disease of the bladder, urinary tract infections and the prostate. These articles contain a great deal of relevant information and are written in a style that makes them remarkably understandable.

Thelma J. Wells contributes a chapter on the social and psychological implications of incontinence that I found rather unconvincing. She makes a number of proposals relating attitudes in the elderly to the technology of hygiene when they were young. Little real evidence is provided to support her thesis and I remained very doubtful about the associations. The chapter on behavioural methods in assessment and treatment contains a number of sections which duplicate, less accurately, details of the pathophysiological mechanisms described elsewhere in the book. I found the behavioural techniques excessively complicated, especially if they are to be applied to the elderly. The sample bladder record chart provided is difficult to follow and unlikely to attract compliance.

Jean Robinson contributes an excellent and very detailed chapter on evaluation techniques that is most informative. I query some of the normal values suggested, such as the lower limit of male maximum flow rate being 30 ml/s, but then normals for an ageing bladder are a difficult problem anyway.

All in all this is a very good book, not just for doctors, but anyone involved in the care of the elderly. I have had no hesitation in placing it on a limited list of reading material that we offer to visitors at our incontinence clinic.

James Malone-Lee
Department of Geriatric Medicine,
University College Hospital Medical School,
London WC1.


This book is written for an audience of medical research workers seeking to understand the statistical methods applied in the medical literature, particularly that concerned with the analysis of data on chronic diseases. Its format reflects the emphasis on use and understanding and is built up around worked examples. It is quite a short text, but succeeds in reaching out to a wide range of techniques including extensive coverage of the analysis of contingency tables, survival curve analysis, linear regression, binary logistic regression and proportional hazards regression. There is also a chapter, right at the end, on the design of trials. Along the way, a number of the difficulties encountered with thoughtless application of statistical methods are highlighted, such as repeated tests of significance in a database, problems with small studies and criteria for combining 2 × 2 contingency tables.

The book is attractively produced and the style is easy to