Book Reviews

Aids to Endocrinology, John C. Stevenson and Pritpal Chahal. Pp. iii + 158, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1985. £4.95.

It is not really clear what this book is for. The introduction states that it is intended for medical students and those taking higher qualifications. There is too much clinical content for pre-clinical medical students. The scope covered is about right for clinical medical students, but as the book consists of a series of one line notes, reading very like student lecture notes and without references, I am not sure how much use it would be. In the majority of the sections there is a vertical list of causes followed by a vertical list of clinical features, a list of investigations, and a list of possible treatment. There is no discussion. By virtue of their brevity, most of the statements are dogmatic. There is no attempt to instil a sense of proportion; the management of Cushing's syndrome is listed as 'treatment of adenoma, removal of ectopic source, and Cyproheptadine'. For these reasons, it would not be possible for example to write an essay on an endocrine topic after reading this book, and neither would it be possible for the non-specialist to manage a patient after consulting it. There are no references. One has to take the statements in the book on a take it or leave it basis. The coverage is comprehensive, but in places not up to date: it is stated for instance that IVF is a limited and controversial procedure, which hardly seems to do justice to the subject. I think this book is inferior to its competitors, e.g. Daggett's *Clinical Endocrinology*, at roughly the same price.

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Atlas of Pediatric Orthopedic Radiology, Alan E. Oestreich and Alvin H. Crawford. Pp. v + 334, illustrated. George Thieme Verlag, Stuttgart, New York, 1985. DM 260.

This monograph is a combined effort of a paediatric/orthopaedic surgeon and a paediatric radiologist. This is a welcome collaboration as no two specialties are as inter-related as these two. The effectiveness of a radiologist is enhanced by understanding the pertinence of the abnormality detected; the orthopaedic surgeon in turn relies on adequate demonstration of these abnormalities.

Most orthopaedic radiology books do not deal adequately with paediatric problems which can be quite different from those in the adult. This well produced and appropriately illustrated atlas, dealing with all the major paediatric entities in the practice of radiology and orthopaedics, fills this gap.

Although the illustrations are of unusually good quality, they are grouped together at the end of each section, making it necessary to turn several pages to look at the relevant X-rays, while reading the text. The text is clear and precise, and current orthopaedic procedures are discussed briefly, giving relevant information to the paediatrician and the radiologist. Reference is made easy by the division of the text into four

sections dealing with general diseases, upper extremities, lower extremities and the trunk. The inclusion of modern techniques such as nuclear medicine, CT scanning, ultrasound and magnetic resonance bring it right up to date. Another useful aspect of the book is the discussion of radiographic positioning, and in particular the good examples of bad positioning, which fail to show the abnormalities.

The DM 260 price tag is justified by the wealth of good quality illustrations.

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Bottling it up, Valerie Curran and Susan Golombok. Pp. 160. Faber, Boston, London, 1985. £3.25.

More than 20 per cent of women in western society are said to receive prescriptions for psychotropic drugs; while twice as many women as men are on tranquillisers, mostly valium or other benzodiazepines. This excellent little book explores the reasons why it is that so many women seem to bottle up their distress, lists information about the side effects of drugs as well as the effects of coming off them, and offers advice and a programme of self-help for those wanting to give them up.

The authors - two women psychologists - make no attempt to conceal their feminist slant. They are resentful of the way women are being wronged by the medical profession ('90% of psychiatrists are men; 60% of their patients are women'), and especially by trigger-happy GPs who reach for the prescription pad as soon as troubled feelings emerge; ('You're a case of valium, you'd better have some anxiety').

Yet they do not underestimate the problems confronting doctors, who hate sending women patients away empty-handed; and just 'being there' takes longer than writing out a prescription. As one patient put it, 'I feel that when the doctor writes me a prescription for valium, it is to put *him* out of *my* misery.'

To make matters worse, doctors who contemplate switching to, say, meprobamate as an alternative will find that the British National Formulary proclaims valium and related benzodiazepines as the most appropriate drugs for relieving chronic anxiety, being not only more effective but less likely to induce dependence!

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Cataract and Lens Implant Surgery: a Systematic Manual, J.J. Kanski and R.B.S. Packard. Pp. iv + 60, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1985. £26.00.

The development and routine use of the operating microscope, improved sutures, sophisticated infusion/aspiration