The art (and science) of obstetrics has changed appreciably since the publication of the 3rd edition of this popular book in 1982. The profession is looking more critically at the scientific validity of our practice and is responding more and more to the reaction from the consumer. The author has succeeded in revising the contents to bring it up to date, whilst retaining the general layout of the previous edition. New and valuable information has been added in material dealing with patients' choice for childbirth and perinatal bereavement – topics which are not only 'fundamental' but also of practical value to the trainee obstetrician. A useful addition is classification and description of various pelvic shapes. There is significant revision in sections dealing with medical disorders of pregnancy, antenatal screening, high risk fetus and examination of the newborn.

Current clinical practice is reflected in the 'fifths' measurement of fetal head, symphysis fundal measurements of fundal height and management of uterine dysfunction in labour. There is a useful and practical chapter on examination of the newborn with a wealth of information on the diagnosis and management of congenital defects. Bibliography at the end is comprehensive.

I have a few minor criticisms – critical factor in the diagnosis of third degree perineal tear is damage to the external anal sphincter and not the rectal mucosa. Ethanol is not administered for treatment of threatened preterm labour. Credes' method of expression of placenta or eliciting Hegar's sign is not encouraged.

The book is well presented and contains a wealth of information. It is inexpensive and will probably continue to be a top seller. It is suitable not only for the undergraduates, but also for those taking 'diploma' examinations. It is a must for the medical libraries.

The contents of vol. 2 cover all aspects of gynaecological practice with up-to-date information in many chapters. Quite properly, importance has been given to medical gynaecology (menstrual disorders, human sexuality) and preventive aspects. Trainees will find a lot of practical information especially in chapters on post-hysterectomy or climacteric. Some topics are dealt with rather briefly, as in the management of anovulation, premenstrual tension syndrome, urodynamic investigation or colposcopy, yet 'intersex' is described in detail. Culdoscopy is described in place of culdocentesis in the management of ectopic pregnancy. A useful chapter on disorders of the breast is included. The bibliography is useful as a guide to further reading.

Like the Obstetric volume, the writing is clear, unequivocal even in areas of controversy. The diagrams are good and add materially to the text. It is very competitively priced.

I have no doubt that undergraduates as well as trainees will find the book of considerable help.

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This textbook sets out to provide a grounding in endocrinology for medical students. The text is clearly laid out and the book is easy to read. The main part of the book is divided into chapters by endocrine gland, each chapter being clearly subdivided into sections with headings. A small number of multiple choice questions is included at the end of each chapter. A moderate number of figures and tables is included and contribute to the text, but clinical photographs are missing. An appendix details some normal ranges for hormones, and gives details of some dynamic tests. The tests are not all given in the most standard form. The TRH dose is twice that often given. Insufficient details are given for safely carrying out an insulin hypoglycaemia test, only a low dose of insulin is stated which in many patients will be insufficient, and the requirements for clinical and biochemical hypoglycaemia are inadequately stated.

The author wishes to introduce 'A perception of the dynamic and multi-dimensional nature of life', but this approach is somewhat unsatisfactory. The initial pages are not an essential part of the book and do not integrate into the remaining text very satisfactorily. These pages might better have been used giving a little more detail in some parts of the main text.

This guide to medical endocrinology tends to be out-of-date. Many of the procedures, investigations and treatments that have become standard in endocrine practice in recent years are mentioned in this book, but often in such a way as to imply they are not fully established or tried. However, the medical students in Western centres will be expected to grasp the relevance of more recent changes in practice.

The section on diabetes is unsatisfactory. Diabetic nephropathy is described as follows: 'Clinically there is proteinuria. This may be followed by a full blown picture of the nephrotic syndrome. Unlike other forms of the nephrotic syndrome, hypertension is an early feature' – this does not seem to be the usual presentation of this lesion. The approach to diabetic diet is old fashioned with a considerable restriction of carbohydrate which these days would not be as marked in the non-overweight, no mention of the potential importance of increasing fibre intake, and no mention of the now more usual advice to reduce animal fat intake. Insulin dependent patients who are young, are suggested to have a typical regime of 5 units of soluble and 20 units of lente insulin in the morning and 15 units of soluble and 10 units of lente insulin in the evening, a regime that would be uncommon. The approach to diabetic pregnancy advised is to admit the patient at around 32 weeks until early induction of labour at 38 weeks. It is suggested that insulin is omitted on the day of delivery. Discussion of the relevance of 'pre-conception control' in reducing fetal abnormality risk is not included. The treatment of diabetic ketoacidosis is acceptable but not ideal. The author states that in cases where coma is prolonged intravenous potassium is necessary. He goes on to say that this should always be administered very slowly in concentrations not exceeding 40 mmol/l, the aim being to maintain a minimum normal serum potassium level. It is not made sufficiently clear that the serum potassium is a poor guide to the gross potassium deficiency of perhaps 500 mmol
that may be present intra-cellularly. The glucose tolerance criteria given are not exactly those offered by the World Health Organisation or by, for example, The British Diabetic Association.

In the endocrine sections similar comments can be made in a number of areas. Cushing's disease and Cushing's syndrome are not clearly differentiated. In discussion of medullary carcinoma of the thyroid, no mention of other endocrine malignancy is made, and no clear description of multiple endocrine adenomatosis is given. Similarly with phaeochromocytoma there is no mention of other tumours or of the familial nature in some patients. While a preparation for surgery is described, it does not make clear that the patient should have the preparation prior to some of the investigations outlined. In discussing the use of phenotlamine in this condition, for the emergency treatment of a hypertensive episode, it is not made clear that 5 mg of phenotlamine intravenously can produce profound hypotension. A continuing list of such comments is perhaps not appropriate for this review, and in the short space offered by this text it is obviously difficult to decide what information should be included and what omitted.

This text is easy to read and quite informative, as far as it goes, but the few inaccuracies, the omissions, and the approach to patterns of investigation for particular conditions are such that this text cannot be recommended without reservation to medical students as their prime source of endocrine and diabetic education.

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This brief book, now in its sixth edition, has clearly sold well in the past. The notes on the back cover suggest it is ‘a clear and concise guide to psychiatry for undergraduate students as well as those postgraduates studying for M.R.C.P. and M.R.C.Psych. examinations’. Considering these three groups in reverse order, the text is far too brief for M.R.C. Psych. students, but at least they would have the knowledge to detect some of the errors in the book. The M.R.C.P. candidate may find the book a useful summary but some areas are insufficiently discussed for this group, the obvious examples being physical presentations of psychiatric illness and drug interactions. Finally, the group for whom I feel the book is really intended – the undergraduate medical and perhaps nursing students, – the text is too brief if this is the only psychiatry book the student will use, and I fear having armed himself with this precis there may be the presumption by the student that he is adequately equipped for the subject. In some cases the balance of the length of chapters seems to be lacking for a general reader, for example, the chapter on disorders of sex and reproduction is given twice as much space as is allocated for that on psychogeriatric problems.

Other disconcerting features of the book stem from its brevity. The chapter on the psychiatric interview provides a good ‘crib list’ that is likely to leave the student doing the history by rote rather than with understanding. An example of ‘textbook hand-me-down information’ is the inclusion of proverbs as a test of concrete thinking without pointing out that this is of no relevance in diagnosing schizophrenia (which the student is otherwise likely to presume). In the pursuit of brevity some other simplifications were made and this reviewer was irritated that section numbers for the Scottish Mental Health Act were not provided – surely leaving this group of students without what is clearly considered by the authors to be relevant information south of the Border.

I found approximately three dozen statements which I thought were either factually incorrect or displayed an attitude which I found hard to tolerate. Despite the above criticisms there were a number of features which I found particularly positive. Best of these was the use of epidemiological figures and other statistics at the start of many of the chapters to give the uninitiated reader a perspective as to the likelihood of seeing a particular group of patients. The chapter on psychological tests and the three chapters towards the end of the book on treatment are all very good with the account of the range of psychological treatments being exceptional in view of the limited (eight pages) allocation of space.

I am sure this book will continue to sell well – students always like brief notes. I would, however, exhort the authors to make slightly extended notes in the seventh edition when it appears.

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The aim of the book is to be comprehensive and to include all the basic subjects in science and clinical medicine relevant to the practice of orthopaedic surgery. The author has succeeded in this difficult task and deserves congratulations on a fine production of core material. As the book is directed to North American readers the first section on anatomy, physiology, histology and biochemistry will probably be glossed over by British students. Chapters on the disorders and injuries of the musculoskeletal system in children and adults are similar to many other books but are right up-to-date. However, the author breaks new ground with a section on biomechanics, orthoses and amputations, topics rarely discussed in basic textbooks; and for completeness the appendix deals with physical signs, splints and traction. There is no doubt that a careful study of the volume will provide an excellent foundation for orthopaedic knowledge. Dr Rodrigo’s book will be useful for British postgraduate students preparing for the special examination in orthopaedic surgery held by the Royal College of Surgeons of