Principles of Toxicological Pathology, John R. Glaister. Pp. viii + 223, illustrated. Taylor & Francis, London, Philadelphia, 1986. £25.00.

One way to test true expertise, i.e. breadth of knowledge plus depth of understanding, is to see how much of the core of a subject can be presented and made interesting in as small a space as possible. Dr Glaister has done a good job in an efficient way.

His intention has been to explain the principles of pathology, and then to show how those basic mechanisms can be discerned and their features used to diagnose and classify histopathological changes in disease processes affecting the main organ systems. He has written as a histopathologist with considerable experience of experimental studies in the conventional laboratory species, but he has not ignored the more general connotations of pathology.

The book is broad but concise without being terse. It is written in an economical style and is conveniently illustrated with simple sketches. The emphasis is on appearances and findings more than on cellular mechanisms or technical details. It will certainly help the toxicologists for whom it was written, and it should prove attractive to those in the paramedical disciplines, whose need to know something of pathology has not previously been so attractively met.

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Recent Advances in Dermatology, No. 7, edited by R.H. Champion. Pp. xi + 270, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £28.00.

As well as keeping abreast of developments within their specialty, practising dermatologists (and other specialists) need to be aware of the much larger world beyond. In this latest edition of *Recent Advances in Dermatology* there are several chapters illustrating exciting applications of basic science to the study of skin disease, including essays on gene cloning, monoclonal antibodies, substances produced by T lymphocytes, oncogenes, the molecular biology of collagen, and the roles in health and disease of plasminogen activator.

Another valuable group of contributions are those where there is overlap with other clinical disciplines. These include chapters on the vulva, with a useful update on the role of human papilloma virus in neoplasia and recent changes in classification; the teeth and skin disease – an area meagrely covered in textbooks; and a thoughtful collaborative chapter on the assessment of vascular abnormalities in the leg with emphasis on modern non-invasive techniques. Some aspects of surgery in dermatology, still rather underdeveloped in Britain, are discussed, the sections on Mohs' technique and lasers being particularly useful. There is an excellent critical review on specific desensitisation, with special reference to

insect sting allergy and atopic dermatitis. Mainline dermatology is represented by chapters on the prevention of industrial dermatitis, drug eruptions and an update on treatment. Dermatologists are nowadays expected to know something about chiropractors, homoeopaths and other alternative practitioners – and the volume closes with a critical review.

Volume 7 of *Recent Advances in Dermatology* clearly establishes its role as being complementary to both textbooks and original research, and should be read by all with an interest in the skin.

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Resuscitation: Care of the Critically Ill, Second edition, David K. Brooks. Pp. x + 454, illustrated. Edward Arnold, London, 1986. £72.50.

This book by an accident and emergency physician reappears after 20 years. It details management for a wide range of critical care situations in relation to biochemical, respiratory and cardiac pathophysiology. The book adopts an academic approach to a large number of medical conditions though topics such as poisoning and acute problems in trauma, haematology and gastroenterology are not included.

Electrolytes and acid-base balance are over-emphasized and the reader may be forgiven for thinking that hypertonic saline and sodium bicarbonate are panaceas for hypovolaemic shock and all ills. The section on acute renal failure makes no mention of the technique of haemofiltration and gives a muddled description for managing hypokalaemia.

The chapter on respiratory failure is disappointing. Oxygen masks are disparaged in favour of nasal catheters though no mention is made of Venturi (H.A.F.O.E.) masks for controlled oxygen therapy. The use of intravenous bicarbonate for acute respiratory failure will surprise many readers. The short section on ventilators and ventilatory management is outdated and includes the Radford nomogram in place of frequent blood gas analysis – a graph of virtual shunt lines would have been more useful. A chapter on hyperbaric oxygen therapy includes resuscitation of the newborn as one of its indications.

The cardiological section is extensive, reflecting the author's interests. Emphasis is given to electrophysiology including subtle conduction disturbances though therapeutic cardiac pacing is barely discussed. There is a well illustrated chapter on the history of resuscitation though the manual methods of the 1950s are not included. Modern C.P.R. is covered several chapters later and varies considerably from the recommendations of American and British resuscitation authorities. Does the author really advise 2 mg i.v. adrenaline for cardiac arrest before connecting an ECG? Topics such as the use of i.v. nitrates in cardiac failure, the value of Swan Ganz catheters and the use of streptokinase in massive pulmonary embolism are each dismissed in single sentences.

The book has almost 2000 references though relatively few