Book Reviews

Clinical Examination: a Textbook for Students and Doctors by Teachers of the Edinburgh Medical School. Seventh edition, edited by John Macleod and John Munro. Pp. vii + 483, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £8.95.

During my final year in medical school I had the good sense to acquire a copy of a newly published book on clinical examination. 'Macleod', as it is now popularly known, proved a durable investment, and although I have long since discarded other text books of that era, it still finds room on my bookshelf. This now classic text has reached its seventh edition under the guidance of its original editor, John Macleod, assisted by John Munro, and other contributors drawn from the Edinburgh Medical School.

The format is unchanged, with chapters on the general principles governing physical examination, analysis of symptoms and signs, and external features of disease, before each of the systems is considered in detail. Clinical skills of history taking and physical examination are clearly presented in a crisp readable style, and physical findings correlated with anatomy and physiology. Examination techniques are illustrated by numerous line drawings supplemented by figures and colour plates.

More emphasis is now given to relevant specialized investigations which may be indicated after full clinical evaluation, and each chapter now concludes with examples of clinical methods in practice, for example, examination of the unconscious patient, and determination of brain death. An appendix provides various useful tables, questionnaires for investigation of sexual problems, and a system for case recording. Laurence Weed's problem orientated medical approach to medical records is described, but more perhaps might have been made of the value of problem listing as an approach to rational evaluation of history and physical examination before attempting a differential diagnosis. The type setting is improved and the present edition more compact than earlier versions, although it is not a pocket book.

Clinical Examination provides an outstanding introduction to clinical method which, despite technological advance, remains fundamental to good medical practice. The latest edition of this deservedly popular book is excellent value and can be recommended to both undergraduates and physicians in training.

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Davidson and Passmore Human Nutrition and Dietetics. Eighth edition, R. Passmore and M.A. Eastwood. Pp. v + 666, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £30.00 (cased), £20.00 (paper).

This textbook has now been the bible of nutrition for just over 25 years. The latest edition is the 8th and has been revised in parts with more emphasis on Western nutritional disorders written by clinicians active in their specialty. It still has, however, a major emphasis on basic nutritional science and is aimed mainly at those undergraduates training in food or related subjects. Nevertheless there are some surprising defects such as the sparse interest given to one of the major nutritional disorders of the affluent world, namely obesity. Anyone reading this chapter would not be able to advise the obese person on the current knowledge of aetiology or management. More emphasis should have been given to the various diets now available, especially the liquid very low calorie diets, the use of appetite and thermogenic agents, behavioural therapy, exercise and the arguments for and against surgery. Likewise the chapter on hyperlipidaemia is also somewhat sparse, although the revised chapters on coronary heart disease, diabetes mellitus and gastrointestinal disorders were good. The practising dietician and also the clinician would find this book of limited use for it does not appear to give much practical advice, its major emphasis being on general concepts. For instance there is only rudimentary advice on enteral and parenteral feeding, and on the dietary management of various metabolic disorders. Whereas this book places much emphasis on disease due to vitamin depletion, it has little on the nutritional danger of the many 'fad' diets of modern society. One has the distinct impression that this latest edition has not yet really adapted to the modern era. Nevertheless this is still an excellent primer for those studying basic food sciences and for those most concerned with the nutrition of poor societies.

This book, however, is of limited value as regards practical knowledge of nutrition required by dieticians, medical students and clinicians.

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Dementia: a Clinical Approach, J.M.S. Pearce. Pp. xiii + 173, illustrated. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford, London, Edinburgh, Boston, Palo Alto, Melbourne, 1984. £15.00.

The emphasis of this book is on diagnostic assessment and investigation and on the whole it provides a useful framework for the initial clinical management of the patient with dementia.

The chapters by invited contributors are clear and precise