

Book Reviews

Baillière's Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism: International Practice and Research. Vol. 1, No. 1, Feb. 1987. Reproductive Endocrinology, edited by H.G. Burger. Pp. x+246, illustrated. Baillière Tindall, London, Philadelphia, Toronto, Mexico City, Sydney, Tokyo, Hong Kong, 1987. £15.00 (UK & Irish Republic), US \$25.00 (USA & Canada), £18.50 (all other areas).

This volume contains a series of reviews of areas in reproductive endocrinology in which there have been major advances in recent years. The editor, Henry Burger, is to be congratulated on his choice of topics and authors.

Basic physiology and pathophysiology are covered in chapters on pulsatility of luteinising hormone releasing hormone (LHRH), gonadotrophins and sex steroids, relationships between biological and immunological activities of LH, hormonal control of spermatogenesis and intragonadal control mechanisms.

Those who doubted the existence of inhibin have lost. McLachlan and co-workers, in a superb chapter, point out that inhibin has now been purified and its amino acid sequence identified. The pathophysiological studies are under way.

The clinicians review the application of pulsatile administration of LHRH in pubertal disorders and infertility, the use of LHRH analogues, endocrine approaches to male contraception, knowledge from the induced cycles of an IVF programme, oestrogen replacement therapy and the antiprogesterone steroid RU486.

This volume is outstanding and at £15 it represents excellent value.

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Census of Staff Providing Library Services to NHS Personnel, by NHS Regional Librarians Group, Feb. 1987. £6.

The first purpose-built postgraduate centre was opened in Britain in 1961 and thereafter these centres proliferated rapidly; there were 291 by 1978, most having small libraries with varying standards of service. For several years there had been concern about library staffing in the NHS and in 1978 the NHS Regional Librarians Group undertook a census in order to gain an overall view of the situation and provide facts on which any discussions towards improvements could be based.

The publication in 1985 of *Providing a District Library Service* (King's Fund), under the auspices of the NHS/DHSS Health Service Information Steering Group, highlighted the role of library services in the NHS by offering proposals for their development 'in response to

the needs of all users'. Since demand for library services was growing, the RLG decided to take a follow-up census as at December 1985 to obtain up-to-date data on staffing levels, salary gradings and career structure. Analysis of the returns follows the pattern of the 1978 census, with Regional breakdowns of most figures (and 1978 figures in parentheses where available). The results are summarized in 18 tables, with commentary, and reveal a substantial but uneven growth since 1978 in numbers of library staff employed but painfully few signs of the emergence of a rational structure of management or career development.

Although there is some improvement in the position since 1978, the NHS does not offer the career prospects available to librarians in the university and local authority sectors. One hundred and seventy qualified librarians (52%), many of them graduates, were on GAA grade, a grade recommended by the Library Association guidelines as suitable for a Licentiate (one year's postgraduate experience). Of these 170 staff, 133 (66%) had more than six years' experience. Only 21% of NHS librarians were on SAA grade or above; comparable figures for equivalent grades in the university sector are 70%, and in local authority are 51%. In addition, 85 (26%) NHS professionally qualified librarians were employed on clerical grades (CO, PS, HCO).

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Clinical Medicine, edited by P.J. Kumar and M.L. Clark. Pp. xi+1011, illustrated. Baillière Tindall, London, 1987. £17.50.

The authors of this new textbook of medicine have produced a new format in which they have set out to summarise basic anatomical and physiological facts and to describe some of the recent important advances in research essential for the practice of medicine in this decade and this they have achieved.

The style is largely consistent and the text of less than 1000 pages begins with nearly 100 pages on infectious diseases and tropical medicine followed by good basic accounts of genetics, molecular biology and immunology with chapters on nutrition, oncology, water, electrolyte and acid base homeostasis, intensive care, adverse drug reactions and poisonings, environmental and metabolic disorders and psychological medicine in addition to those describing the diseases of specific organs. It is well illustrated with over 900 figures (many of which are clear line diagrams) and tables and there are several useful appendices. Other helpful features are the many tabulated summaries and indicators of signs of greater discriminant value in the clinical diagnosis of endocrine disorders. However, there are no descriptions of the manifestations