

Book Reviews

Amyloidosis and Amyloid P Component, C.R.K. Hind. Pp. vii+97, illustrated. Longman Scientific & Technical, Harlow, 1986. £17.50.

I enjoyed reading this short monograph of 97 pages on the subject of amyloidosis and amyloid P component. It is an extremely comprehensive review of the current status of amyloidosis and would be of interest to all physicians dealing with this subject. The book is extremely well referenced throughout and appears to be up to date. There are eight chapters dealing comprehensively with systemic amyloidosis, localised amyloidosis, amyloid fibril proteins and their precursors, serum amyloid P component, pathogenesis of amyloid fibril deposition, diagnosis of amyloidosis, and prognosis and management of amyloidosis. I would regard this book as being a very good one for personal usage but certainly it deserves to be in any medical library.

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Atlas of Clinical Dermatology, Anthony du Vivier. Pp. viii+412, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1987. £85.

Dr du Vivier has produced a really excellent and comprehensive catalogue of clinical dermatology which should appeal to all those who have to deal with patients with skin disease. The numerous illustrations, mostly of superb quality, depict not only the clinical manifestations of various dermatoses but also include selected histopathological photomicrographs and electron micrographs. Tables and diagrams have been added where appropriate and the text is clear, helpful and concise.

The chapters are logically arranged starting with a most useful section on normal skin and, although concentrating on common disorders many rarer conditions are discussed where there is an important point to be made. The selection of clinical photographs is excellent. Possibly the choice of histological illustrations is less well balanced (seventeen of mycosis fungoides and not one of syphilis) but overall they complement the clinical material very well. Dr du Vivier does not suggest at whom his atlas is mainly directed, but one assumes that the dermatologist in training is likely more than most to benefit from the splendid combination of short textbook, clinical atlas and dermatopathology primer. The price is very reasonable for a work with so many colour illustrations and many doctors will want their own copy both as a superb teaching reference and an eminently readable book through which to browse.

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Atlas of Cutaneous Surgery, Neil A. Swanson. Pp. xiii+177, illustrated. Little, Brown, Boston, Toronto, 1987. £21.50.

As a plastic surgeon I find little to commend this book which contains a crude description of basic plastic surgery by a dermatologist. The author has obviously enjoyed his own experience of cutaneous surgery and wishes others to share this. He explains in the preface that 'it is the goal of this book to help physicians to discover the fun of cutaneous surgery'. While it is commendable to enjoy one's work it is also important not to treat patients as toys with which to play.

The first chapter on basic techniques starts with a very basic account of some surgical instruments with a bias of the author's favourites. The purpose of the difference between similar instruments such as the toothed and non-toothed forceps is, however, not made clear. A long section on suture techniques elaborates on the different types without indicating in detail when and where they are useful. One of the few examples given is the use of a vertical mattress suture in the forehead which I expect would be deplored by any plastic surgeon.

The second chapter on advanced techniques describes the different types of flaps. Each flap is described as being most useful without any clear indication of when and where this is the case. The third chapter on skin grafts describes the principles of skin grafting but many important practical aspects are omitted or inadequately explained. In the appendices there are misleading diagrams of tension lines and the anatomical drawings are very primitive.

While it is important for all dermatologists to know and understand the basic principles of surgery of skin lesions, I would suggest a few hours spent with a plastic surgeon in theatre would be far more profitable than pursuing the exercises on pigs feet which are described and encouraged throughout this book.

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Clinics in Immunology and Allergy. Vol. 6, no. 3, Oct. 1986. **AIDS and HIV Infection**, edited by Anthony J. Pinching. Pp. x+687, illustrated. W.B. Saunders Company, London, Philadelphia, Toronto, 1986. £17.50.

I was asked to review this book in June 1987, but was unable to put pen to paper until October, one full year after publication. Nothing much written about AIDS nowadays stands the test of time; the epidemiology is changing as the disease moves out of the homosexual community, every month something new is discovered about the virus and the treatment of infected patients. Nevertheless, this book has a compactness about it, and comprehensively covers the clinical aspects of AIDS as

they appeared a year ago. Lifson *et al.*'s account of the epidemiology is historically interesting although it lacks all the recent data from Africa which is beginning to explain the epidemic in females. There is also nothing of substance about the different viruses found in humans and monkeys in Africa. Dr Pinching describes the spectrum of HIV infection and adds a '*cri de coeur*' on how the epidemic should be contained. Surprisingly he does not discuss why AIDS is not a statutorily notifiable disease; to my mind a central issue which seems to have been forgotten. There are some very useful chapters and illustrations on clinical complications, the management of which has not changed significantly over the past year. The chapters on AIDS-related conditions and on the virus itself are a little out of date, underlining the speed with which new information becomes available. The interpretation of antibody tests, the availability of antigen tests and the use of AZT over the past year has changed the way in which clinicians diagnose and treat HIV infection.

This must be one of the first clinical reviews which contains a comprehensive chapter on counselling patients with a chronic disease. I have the uneasy feeling that the complex set of 'rules' involved in counselling must distract the clinician from the main purpose of meticulous treatment of complications, keeping up to date with new antiviral agents, and taking an active interest in containing the epidemic. I think we shall look back with regret at the obsession in the 1980s with protecting people's privacy at all costs.

In summary, this is a well presented book which sets the scene on AIDS in the early 1980s. However, clinicians treating patients with AIDS cannot rely on reviews like this but must keep up with the literature and seek advice from specialist centres.

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Diseases of the Gut and Pancreas, edited by J.J. Misiewicz, R.E. Pounder and C.W. Venables. Pp. xvi+1252, illustrated. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford, London, Edinburgh, Boston, Palo Alto, Melbourne, 1987. £67.50.

This new textbook consists of 12 sections with 78 chapters. Most of the authors are acknowledged experts in their chosen topics; some are less well known, of lecturer or research associate status.

The editors' stated aim is to give a practical account of modern gastroenterology at a postgraduate level, primarily for physicians and surgeons in training. There is some degree of overlap, as is inevitable in a multi-author tome, but this is never obtrusive.

There is an excellent account of the medical treatment of peptic ulcer (157 references) which should be of help to all doctors with a major interest in the stock-market. The sections on the pancreas are sound. Axon refers to gallstone-induced chronic pancreatitis, confirming one's suspicions that modern pancreatologists, having rejected

the Marseilles classification, are not sure what to put in its place. No hepatology is included, apart from a sound chapter on variceal haemorrhage. The accounts of gut ischaemia and irritable bowel syndrome are outstanding. Enteral and parenteral nutrition are well covered, and there is a good chapter on gastrointestinal disease in children by Nelson.

The market for gastroenterology textbooks is now very crowded, but *Diseases of the Gut and Pancreas* should find an important niche. All the major topics in gastroenterology are well discussed. The standard of writing is very high, the style clear and stimulating. This is an important book which can be highly recommended, not only to physicians and surgeons in training, but also to professional gastroenterologists who will find it to be well-illustrated, authoritative and above all, easy to read.

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Health and Lifestyle Survey, edited by B.D. Cox *et al.* Pp. 212, illustrated. Health Promotion Research Trust, 1987. £16.

The Health and Lifestyle Survey is necessary reading for everyone concerned with the health of the population and particularly with health education. The survey aimed at examining the relationship of lifestyles, behaviour and circumstances to the physical and mental health of a large representative sample of the British population. Using random selection from electoral registers and with a good response rate, 9003 adults (over 18) were recruited in 1984-5. The information (all schedules are appended) was collected at two home visits and this report presents a brief, very readable text on each area of investigation with supporting tables, figures and references. The sections deal with self-reported health; blood pressure and respiratory function; height, weight and girth; cognitive functions (memory, reasoning) and psychological factors. Within each section the data are analysed by sex, age, socio-economic group, standard geographic region and smoking status. Dietary and exercise (leisure and work) patterns are considered, the latter in relation to the physical measures as well as drinking and smoking behaviour. Smoking information records one-third of subjects who gave up regular smoking, doing so for reasons of ill-health and only 2% because of health education. Alcohol consumption reveals clearly the poorer health status of ex-drinkers particularly in relation to heart trouble, hypertension and stomach trouble. There are excellent sections on 'healthy' behaviour, on beliefs about the causes of health and ill-health and on attitudes to health. The appendices cover methodology, definitions and instrumentation as well as the complete schedules.

This is an extremely useful survey and will provide a baseline for comparison with other surveys as well as an inspiration for more detailed research. The team from the University of Cambridge deserve high praise for the clarity with which the material has been presented. My