of the patient and his family at each stage from the onset to the final stages. These are laden with practical counsel, lists and pictures of appliances, and with information about the social and welfare services available, including the resources of the MND Associations. These are likely to be most helpful to the wide variety of therapists and carers invoked in the team concept deemed necessary for the management of the illness. They are of even greater importance to the family. There is no discussion on the present trend to prolong the life of advanced cases with mechanical ventilators at home, a technique used frequently in the USA, but seen by many British neurologists as a means of prolonging the agonising process of dying. The ethical problems of assisted ventilation are considerable, as are those concerned with some of the surgical procedures mentioned, e.g. gastrostomy, oesophagostomy and cricopharyngeal myotomy. The reader will likewise search in vain for any detailed advice about when and when not to use antibiotics and when and when not it is appropriate to treat pulmonary aspiration and other intercurrent infections. These are important omissions from an otherwise admirable and compassionate concept; a second edition should remedy them.

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Multiple Sclerosis – Immunological, Diagnostic and Therapeutic Aspects. Number 3. **Current Problems in Neurology**, edited by F. Clifford Rose and Rosemary Jones. Pp. ix + 260, illustrated. John Libbey, London, Paris, 1987. £26.

This book, edited by F. Clifford Rose and Rosemary Jones, is based on a Symposium on Multiple Sclerosis which was held at Charing Cross Hospital in the autumn of 1986. The volume consists of a large number (33) of short chapters on various aspects of the disease, broadly grouped under immunological, diagnostic and therapeutic sections. As would be expected in a multi-authored volume of this kind the quality of the contributions varies considerably. While some chapters are neither informative nor inspiring, others such as those on experimental optic nerve demyelination induced by Semliki Forest virus, biochemical aspects of brain integrity, magnetic resonance imaging and dietary supplementation in multiple sclerosis, provide useful information. The range of subjects covered is certainly wide and the editors have clearly been keen to include a number of controversial issues such as the role of spirochaetal infection, the utility of hyperbaric oxygen and studies of erythrocyte electrophoretic mobility in the disease. I think it would have been helpful to have more review chapters on these more contentious aspects. Inevitably it was not possible to deal with any of the subjects in real depth but, as indicated in the Preface, this was not the editors' specific intention. The real advantage of this kind of approach is the broad scope which allows the non-specialist reader to gain an overview of the com-

plexity of the subject and in this regard the book is a success. As a 'specialist' in the neuroimmunology field I was certainly stimulated by several of the contributions and the book should also serve as a useful source of references. The volume is generally well produced and reasonably priced. It should provide a useful addition to the burgeoning literature on multiple sclerosis.

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Obstetrics and Gynaecology in General Practice, John Eddy and John D. Owen. *Library of General Practice*. Vol. 12. Pp. xi + 415, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1987. £19.95.

This book is the latest volume in the *Library of General Practice* series. Therefore, it is of particular relevance to all general practitioners and the easily readable, informative style makes it interesting and stimulating.

The layout makes it an excellent text for reference, with the subjects of obstetrics and gynaecology covered separately. Management advice is succinct and the point at which a referral to a consultant unit becomes mandatory is also clear. In addition, there is advice on timely filling in of the correct forms, ranging from ante-natal to requests for therapeutic abortions. Treatment methods are given, complete with proper drug dosages and contraindications. Throughout, the text is illustrated with unambiguous diagrams, photographs, pictures, graphs and tables, all of which are excellent supplements.

It is worth noting that certain information contained in the book needs updating, although these details are of a relatively minor nature.

The book remains uncomplicated and helpful, despite thorough and accurate coverage of all the main areas in obstetrics and gynaecology encountered by the general practitioner in everyday practice. It is obvious that the distinct skills of the two authors, one a consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology, the other a general practitioner, have been successfully combined to produce this book. It is likely to become important reading for all trainees and is recommended to practising general practitioners.

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Perspectives on Mammalian Cell Death, edited by C.S. Potten. Pp. xv + 363, illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Tokyo, 1987. £40.

This is a comprehensive multi-author review of several aspects of cell death. Each author is a specialist in the field. The topics covered are membrane changes, nuclear-

cytoplasmic ratios, ultrastructure and histological changes associated with cell death. The experimental work covered includes the effects of irradiation and immunologically mediated cell death. Cell death in development spermatogenesis and tumour pathology have separate chapters. The final chapter discusses the role of cell death in cellular hierarchies. The chapters are well cross-referenced so this material is easily extracted.

This is a well presented book, easy to read with good reproduction of photographs, particularly electron micrographs, and good line drawings. Some figures are a little crowded probably because authors wish to include extensive research details. The book should have wide appeal to postgraduate students of several specialties who wish to read into the subject. The book would be of value to all fields of medical science, both academic and service orientated. In addition, the layout of other chapters outside their sphere of direct interest with an introduction and summary and terms clearly defined, allows readers to cover peripheral topics easily. The discussion sections are open-ended, making them appealing to workers in these specialist fields.

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Rheumatology for General Practitioners, by H.L.F. Currey & Sally Hull. Pp. viii+259, illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Tokyo, 1987. £15.

This plastic-covered book is the eleventh in the Oxford General Practice series. One author is a professor of rheumatology and the other a lecturer in general practice. They offer 17 chapters, 3 appendices, and a list of 'useful addresses'. The first nine chapters focus on diseases and the next six on 'regional problems'. This approach seems to work fairly well although a consequence is the occasional need for the reader to turn back and forth through the book to follow the authors' line of thought about a particular problem.

A number of line drawings are used to illustrate the authors' points. I found these clear and most seemed to contribute to my understanding of the text, the clarity of which is admirable throughout.

The authors state that their 'book is for the general practitioner who wants to extend his knowledge and practical application of rheumatology, so that he may take a more central role in the management of his patients.' Since I believe that they have provided the minimum which any general practitioner should know at completion of vocational training, I do not know whether they have lower expectations of GPs than I do. In any case, what they write will be helpful in updating the knowledge of those of us whose original clinical training preceded the developments of modern rheumatology and immunology, although not the use of skills of examination, manipulation, and giving advice about exercises. In particular the appendix on investigations seemed very helpful.

This is the first volume in the Oxford General Practice series to have a title in the format '... for general practitioners' and perhaps this is why I feel in dispute with the authors about the level of attainment they believe they are describing. Seven of the other titles use the form '... in general practice' and I assume that the eminent members of the editorial board have some purpose in making the distinction to which I draw attention. One consequence that readers should note, however, is that there is an earlier competing title in the series, 'Locomotor Disability in General Practice' published in 1983. This is a longer and multi-author book. There is a considerable overlap in content between the present volume and the older one and prospective purchasers should check one against the other before deciding to buy either or both.

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Vascular Endothelium in Hemostasis and Thrombosis, M.A. Gimbrone. Pp. x+250, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £38.

This book represents the second in a series dedicated to contemporary issues in haemostasis and thrombosis. It is a multi-authored text divided into twelve sections with all the authors apart from one working in North America. This reflects the tremendous explosion in the last decade of research interest and development in the area of how the vascular endothelial cell interacts with the flowing blood constituents in the physiological control of the haemostatic mechanism. In each chapter a similar approach has been followed with an outline of how basic research tools of biochemistry, cell biology and molecular biology have been used and the positive experimental findings highlighted. This outline has been applied to the procoagulant reactions on the endothelial surface, prostacyclin, heparin-thrombin interactions, protein C regulation, fibrinolysis, von Willebrand factor, endothelial cell culture systems and wound healing. All this experimental work is interpreted with reviews of normal physiological events and their importance in pathological processes. This book will appeal primarily to the research worker studying vascular endothelial events and the physician and scientist working generally in a specialized haemostasis unit. Concerning the series as a whole the approach is similar to that adopted in the 'Clinics' and 'Seminars' type of publication. However, this text is aimed primarily at the specialized haemostasis clinical and research groups rather than a generalized haematological audience or junior doctor in training.

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