

Book Reviews

Bailliere's Clinical Haematology - International Practice and Research, edited by T.J. McElwain & T.A. Lister. Pp. ix + 269, illustrated. Bailliere Tindall, London, Philadelphia, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo, Hong Kong, 1987.

Editing a book on growing points in such a rapidly changing subject as lymphoma is no mean task, and Professor McElwain and Dr Lister are to be congratulated on achieving a nice balance of scientific and clinical interests. Although the literary styles of the contributions differ, the standard is high throughout, and the reader cannot fail to glean new facts or a fresh perspective. One is aware that the chapters have been rigorously pruned of all non-essential material, the work is carefully referenced, and the amount of overlap between contributors minimal.

This volume will be useful for a long time to come, for clinical haematologists and all who treat patients with lymphoma, for trainee haematologists working for MRCPATH, and for laboratory workers in pathology, haematology, immunology, virology, etc, where lymphoma produces such major interest.

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Child Health Clinics - a Handbook for Doctors, by M. Barker & J. Ferrier. Pp. xi + 120. John Wiley & Sons, New York, Brisbane, Toronto, Singapore, 1988, £9.50.

'It can be alarming to the young doctor recently out of hospital to start work in a child health clinic and find himself suddenly expected to answer questions which he has never met before.'

This opening warning in this new handbook is sadly, only too true. Sadly, because many of the questions raised in child health clinics are also raised in general practice. It is a sobering thought that after years of training a newly qualified doctor is unprepared for such an important area of work. The authors try to fill this gap by writing, with brevity, a pocket book that can be read 'in a couple of hours' and kept handy for ready reference. As such it is a brave effort and some doctors will indeed find it useful for this purpose. Others will find the brevity disconcerting, especially on such complex issues as the abused or language handicapped child.

The text covers matters such as clinic organisation, common physical, emotional and behavioural problems. No attempt has been made to discuss these in social, family or cultural contexts. Nor has there been space to review the evolution of contemporary practice, or models of teamwork within and beyond the clinic with other professionals. The authors do state that their work is intended to be complementary to the well known paediatric textbooks. Used in this context it could be a useful ready reference. But it is important to be aware that it does only cover basic data. The work at child health

clinics demands a sensitized and intelligent response from doctors willing to learn through experience.

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Clinical Pharmacology, Sixth edition, edited by D.R. Laurence & P.N. Bennett. Pp. x + 776, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, New York, 1987. £19.95.

Many doctors like myself will have fond memories of Professor Laurence's small yellow text book of *Clinical Pharmacology* first published in 1960. The original book had considerable character and, as stated in the first preface, offered a reasonably brief solution to the problem of combining practical clinical utility with some account of pharmacology. Clinical pharmacology has progressed dramatically since that time with both the increasing numbers of agents available and our improved understanding of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics. For the medical student today, there is a wide variety of text books/reference books in clinical pharmacology written by both British and American authors and, therefore, the choice of which to buy or read is all the more difficult. The present sixth edition of *Clinical Pharmacology* by Professor Laurence and Dr Bennett has considerably changed from the original in both format and content. It is no longer a brief solution but has assumed the proportions of a large and quite authoritative work being approximately twice the size of the original. The authors acknowledge that it has been very difficult for them to decide how much practical and technical detail to include and, probably more importantly, what exactly to leave out. The present edition covers topics in clinical pharmacology very similar to those in other text books aimed at the same audience. The balance of subject material is acceptable for undergraduate medical students and the style of the text gains considerably from having been written principally by only two authors. My major criticism is that the figures have been very little updated from the earlier editions. Whilst these figures are very helpful, there are still too few of them for a textbook of this size, particularly as compared to the competition. For example, the cardiovascular pharmacology section extends over 70 pages with only one figure throughout.

Overall, this sixth edition of 'Laurence's *Clinical Pharmacology*' is a useful addition to the presently available textbooks in this area. I am sure that it will be found to be as welcome to the new medical students as it is to the older ones like myself.

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