


The latest addition to Heinemann's 'Mainstream Medicine' series of short specialist textbooks has been produced by a distinguished practising nephrologist. The series is aimed mainly at postgraduates preparing for MRCP (UK) but also seeks to be useful at the bedside by 'summarising relevant information at rather more lengths than is possible in a general textbook of medicine'. Hopefully these two aims are not unrelated. I am sure that careful study of this volume would repay most MRCP (UK) candidates and I am equally sure of its potential usefulness in the clinical situation. One could speculate however, whether, for either of these stated purposes, this work has any major advantages, other than transportability, over say the relevant section in the Oxford Textbook of Medicine.

Having said that, what has been produced is a readable authoritative but not comprehensive resumé of contemporary nephrology. There are good chapters on dialysis, transplantation, glomerulonephritis, systemic diseases and urinary tract infection. The section on renal physiology is perhaps a little sparse. There are no chapters on the important topics of fluid and electrolyte disturbances and drugs and the kidney. The content is reasonably up to date though monoclonal erythropoietin, anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibody, and continuous arteriovenous haemodialysis do not gain a mention, which serves to indicate the pace of recent development. The tables are in the main thoughtfully constructed and complementary to the text. Diagrams are useful but scarce. There are a few slips showing through the proof reading such as the designation of 'hyperkalaemia' as a feature of Fanconi syndrome. Overall though the book will fulfil its stated aims and is reasonable value at £12.95.

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Textbooks on tropical medicine may be of two types: one dealing solely with tropical diseases and parasites (descriptions of which seldom change), the other, in addition to the above, also includes conditions common but not peculiar to developing countries (not necessarily tropical). The nineteenth edition of this book has been radically revised and enlarged and fits the latter category.

New sections include diseases commonly presenting with fever, diseases commonly presenting with diarrhoea, and protecting the traveller. A section on ectoparasites and myiasis brings a number of diverse conditions under one heading. There are also two chapters on the differential diagnosis of fever, and of diarrhoea which naturally result in some overlap with the above sections.

New subjects include cardiovascular diseases, respiratory problems and metabolic disorders (primarily diabetes). The chapters on haematology (includes the leukaemias), gastroenterology (includes a small section on liver disorders), tuberculosis, neurology, dermatology, cancer, eye disorders and sexually transmitted diseases have been considerably enlarged. The latter chapter now includes a section on AIDS.

As in previous editions the appendices include an excellent section on drugs and their metabolism. The section on