only for radiology trainees but also for other clinicians requiring a simple reference source for basic anatomy as applied to radiology.

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Passing the FRCS, Ivor A. Sewell. Pp. viii + 331. Butterworth Scientific, Guildford, Surrey, 1989. £10.95.

The Fellowship examination of the four Royal Colleges of Surgeons presents a tremendous hurdle to surgeons in training. Many of them take these examinations without any, or only little, exposure to formal teaching, while others supplement their studies, carried out in odd moments of their off-duty, by attendance at short 'cramming' courses. It is not surprising, therefore, that these examinations have a fierce failure rate, with less than 20% of candidates being successful at first attempt.

As an aid to passing, this examination, the author (who has tutored postgraduates for many years), has written a useful guide for surgical trainees. Not only does Mr Sewell give guidance to the format of the examination, and how the candidate should tackle the written, clinical and oral parts of the FRCS, but he also offers good advice on how to organise study and training and the implication and responsibilities of becoming a Fellow. Furthermore, there is sound counselling both for the candidates who fail and for the ones who succeed with regard to future career opportunities.

Certainly this is a book which any aspiring examinee would do well to study.

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Recent Advances in Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology. No. 4, P. Turner and G.N. Volans. Pp. xi + 255, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York. 1989. £45.00.

This is yet another fine horse from a very good stable! The new 'Recent Advances' certainly lives up to its predecessors. The editors, Paul Turner and Glyn Volans, have this time broadened the contents of the series to include important advances in the field of clinical toxicology. The book contains thirteen chapters, all as before extremely well represented. Four of the thirteen articles are primarily toxicological but covering such topics as genetic polymorphism in human toxicology, antidotes to human toxins, pesticides use – risk or safety, aluminium toxicity, are of great general clinical interest.

The book opens with a chapter by Anthony Jones and Bernard Haziere on brain receptor imaging and proton emission tomography in relationship to clinical pharmacology. Following an outline of PET technology, an account is given of important opioid and dopamine brain receptor studies in man.

I also enjoyed the chapter on drug concentration effect relationships in man. Whilst to an extent mathematical, these

concepts are very important and affect a number of topical clinical issues.

Finding a chapter on the pharmacology of atrial natriuretic factor came as no surprise. This review by Wilkins, Lewis and Kendall is excellent and particularly well referenced.

Another important but perhaps slightly less fashionable topic is covered in the chapter on drugs and male reproductive function. Drugs causing sexual dysfunction, methods of dealing with sexual dysfunction and male contraceptives are admirably dealt with by Professor C.Y. Hong, Professor of Medicine at Taipei in the People's Republic of China. I was also pleased to see a chapter reviewing the clinical pharmacology of the skin. This concentrates on various aspects of percutaneous absorption of drugs and on new treatments for psoriasis. There are also good chapters on 'Prostaglandins in the human gastrointestinal tract' and on 'Aspects of nitrate action and tolerance'.

The book is full of important topics. The editors have chose the authors wisely, and the book is extremely well written. It is also a valuable source of references. My only criticism other than the very high price of the book, is that very meagre margins are used. As I have said the text is very good. It needs to be, as the reading of a full page of uninterrupted print required a degree of dedication and is unnecessarily tiring.

However, having said this, I hope we will not have to wait another 5 years before the next Recent Advances and we will await its appearance with eagerness and enthusiasm.

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Thoracic Surgery, Mark A. Foss. Pp. xiii + 168. Austen Cornish Publishers, London, 1989. £15.00.

This is one of the most sensible nursing textbooks I have ever read. It is always difficult to decide what is or is not relevant, but in this book the balance has been perfectly struck. For example, it is not necessary for a nurse to know the detailed physiology that controls blood gases. Nevertheless, job satisfaction demands the basic understanding of what is going on around the patient and physiology and pathology of blood gases are succinctly and simply explained. Throughout the book there are short, very understandable descriptions of techniques such as sleeve resection of the bronchus and hiatus hernia repair which gives this book a feeling of completeness, rather than a catalogue of nursing procedures.

It is deceptively short, running to 168 pages, but the reader will soon become very aware of the economy of words. Each sentence is almost a paragraph in its own right and it is a masterpiece in being able to get so much information into such a short space, while at the same time remaining extremely readable. In the same way the photographs and diagrams are very relevant and impart their message succinctly.

The management tends to be dogmatic, clearly based on the experience of the author, but this is in no way a criticism. Readers will be aware that there are many different ways of doing certain procedures and I believe the book would suffer

from lengthy discussion on the 'pros and cons' of a particular management protocol. Everything that is put forward in the book is eminently practical and if the nurses reading it come across something which is at variance with their own experience they will be stimulated to ask the 'reason why' of their superiors or medical colleagues. The author has clearly not bowed to dogma or tradition. This is amply demonstrated in the excellent section on intercostal drainage. The author quietly dismisses the popular misconception that it is safer to clamp a tube rather than risk its disconnection or that perhaps securely binding a tube connection with tape might possibly be ineffective. I am sure these views would raise many eyebrows, but the readers should bow to an author who would seem to have spent more time looking after thoracic surgical patients than writing textbooks. I can thoroughly

recommend this book as a basis for thoracic surgical nursing, but I would go further and say that it would be of value to anybody involved with the care of thoracic patients, particularly physiotherapists and indeed I would recommend it to a junior hospital doctor who is joining a Thoracic Unit for the first time. It gives an excellent basis to the care of thoracic surgical patients and what little information is omitted is well covered by the suggested additional reading in the bibliography. It is, perhaps salutary that my own small thoracic ward has found the need to have 2 copies of this excellent textbook on its shelves.

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Books Received

Clinical Skills in Medicine. Sixth edition, Alan E. Read. Pp. x + 252, illustrated. Wright, London, Boston, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington, 1989. £6.95

Magnesium in Health and Disease (Fifth International Magnesium Symposium), August 8–12, 1988, Kyoto, Japan, edited by Y. Itokawa and J. Durlach. Pp. xx + 432, illustrated. John Libbey, London, Paris, 1989. £36.00.

MCQ Tutor: Psychiatry Today, Robert I. Cohen and Aideen O'Halloran. Pp. 129. Heinemann Medical Books, Oxford, London, Singapore, Nairobi, Ibadan, Kingston, 1989. £10.95.

Neurological Emergencies, S.D. Shorvon. Pp. xi + 108, illustrated. Butterworths in association with Current Medical Literature Ltd, London, Boston, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington, 1989. £5.95.

The Return of Blood to the Heart: Venous Pumps in Health and Disease, A.M.N. Gardner and R.H. Fox. Pp. viii + 184, illustrated. John Libbey, London, Paris, 1989. £25.00, US\$49.00, FF295.