

trying to investigate patients by sequential rather than simultaneous tests. Algorithms remain a fascinating intellectual exercise and I would agree that they could 'provide a lattice-work upon which thoughts could be organised'. As long as the book is used in this way it is both educational and fun.

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Digestive Disease Pathology. Vol. 1, edited by Shaw Watanabe, Marianne Wolff & Sheldon C. Sommers. Pp. 229, illustrated. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1989. £36.00.

It is always useful to consult the preface when considering buying a book and, certainly, before embarking on a book review. Unfortunately, although one is promised in the contents, there is no preface to this book. Therefore, the reader can only guess at its purpose before turning to the text itself. It is immediately clear that this is not a review of gastrointestinal pathology but, rather, a catholic collection of what seem to be randomly selected topics, not all of which are necessarily representative of the 'advancing edge' of gastroenterology. Nor is the book an up to date source of information on those topics which it does cover. There are only one or two references later than 1985 and, if the chapters on gastrointestinal lymphoma and mucosal immunity are representative, then the book is very dated indeed. The first chapter, which is a somewhat turgid account of differentiation in gastric cancer, accounts for slightly less than a quarter of the entire book; it is written in the style of a scientific paper as is the second on the prognosis of this disease. The style then changes to that of a book rather than a journal, as chapters follow on a subtype of gastritis, autonomic nerves, lymphoma, neuroendocrine tumours and their cells, protein losing enteropathy and mucosal immunity. The final chapter on Japanese Crohn's disease is once more presented as a formal scientific paper. I have no doubt that the authors have given their best but the editors have not. They appear to have given little guidance to the authors and to have been in no hurry to get the book into press. Perhaps the missing preface is no idle omission; like this reviewer the editors seem to have

been unable to summarise the reasons for producing this volume.

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Ward Rounds for Medical Students – Clinical Medicine, Gerald Sandler. Pp. x + 278, illustrated. Chapman and Hall Medical, London, New York, 1990.

This is a textbook for clinical medical students. The format used is a script of the teaching ward round we all know so well: the difference is that it is in print and therefore endlessly repeatable. Each chapter deals with a common symptom or sign such as dizziness or hypertension, by means of a conversation between consultant, student and, occasionally, patient. A traditional sequence of history, examination, investigation and management is used.

This book is eminently readable. It covers each subject broadly, explaining underlying principles well. It does, however, lack the depth of a more detailed text which is why I feel it will be of most use to students first on the wards, giving them a wide basis of knowledge upon which detail can be added. There is a good selection of apposite X-rays, ECGs, photographs and diagrams interposed with the text. At the end of each chapter there is an excellent section entitled 'Learning Points'. This provides a useful summary, as well as material for those students expected to give the odd list in examinations, particularly like the footnotes applied to each eponym used – another handy guide for examinations and ward rounds.

As this review is appearing in a postgraduate journal, I would like to make a plea that consultants also read this book, as the author's methods of positive criticism (and very little damning sarcasm) are to be applauded and copied. After all, not all doctors are born teachers and much can be learnt from such good example. Although no substitute for the real thing this would be a welcome addition to any student's bookshelf.

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Books Received

'Cabbage Syndrome': the Social Construction of Dependence, Colin Barnes. Pp. ix + 232, The Falmer Press, London, New York, Philadelphia, 1990. £25.00 Hardback; £10.95 paperback.

A Consumer's Guide to Prescription Medicines, Barrington Cooper and Laurence Gerlis. Pp. 719, Hamlyn, London, 1990. £12.95 Hardback; £6.99 paperback.

Hospital-acquired Infection: Principles and Prevention, G.A.J. Ayliffe, B.J. Collins and L.J. Taylor. Second edition. Pp. xii + 140, illustrated. Wright, London, Boston, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington, 1990. £12.95.