and patterns which children graduate through very difficult. He does not explain his process in enough detail to know exactly what he has done to his patients. He compares his results favourably with those from Budapest, but looks at cohorts of patients and pooled results rather than showing us case studies. He finds time to quote verbatim the cruel and unsympathetic words of paediatricians as recalled by disappointed parents, but does not find time to show us the process and result in sufficient detail which is probably why none has been published in reputable journals. Sadly his paragraph on evaluation deals mostly with system evaluation rather than evaluation of results.

The time has come for very particular and specific analysis of the results of early intervention with disabled children. It must be on a limited basis looking objectively at the results of discrete defined interventions. It is already beginning elsewhere, but this book does not contribute to that process.

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This is the third edition of a book which has proved deservedly popular both as an introduction to intensive therapy and as a source of readily available information about many of the problems likely to be encountered in a general intensive care unit. It has grown considerably in the four years since the previous edition and now covers a wide range of topics. Ninety percent of the authors come from Australia and the remainder from Hong Kong so that it is inevitable that the book reflects current anti-podean practice. In general this differs little from that in the UK and should present few problems.

The choice and order of inclusion of topics seems somewhat random and this can make locating information rather difficult. This problem is exacerbated by an index which is less than complete (for instance the entry for cardiac output leads one to a short entry in the chapter on the Critically Ill Child rather than to the much longer and more relevant entry on the subject in the chapter on Haemodynamic Monitoring) and has the infuriating feature of endless cross referrals. The standard of the different contributions is inevitably variable but the majority form reasonably concise and readable reviews of their topics and include a fair number of references, the majority of which are commendably up to date.

The standard of production of the manual is good with a durable binding and reasonably tough paper which is important for a book which will inevitably spend much of its life in the arduous environment of the ITU. There are relatively few illustrations but most seem well chosen and clear. Even the radiographs in the chapter on Imaging Techniques are well reproduced and clearly labelled with the exception of one, which appears to show intubation of the right main bronchus, that lacks any caption at all.

As a general rule the book is better at telling you what procedures to use than it is at giving detailed instructions about how to perform it and the ITU resident in search of instructions on how to insert a pulmonary artery catheter or perform a fibre-optic bronchoscopy in the middle of the night would be better looking elsewhere for help. It more than makes up for this shortcoming by offering concise guidelines for the management of both the common problems encountered on ITU and many of the rarer ones such as botulism.

Despite some minor shortcomings I feel that this book fulfills its intended role as a source of advice on the acute management of the critically ill patient extremely well and that a copy of it should be available for instant reference on the nurses' station of every intensive care unit. It is not particularly expensive and in my view every doctor with an interest in critical care medicine should also acquire an personal copy.

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The Medical School. Stories of the medically macabre.

This is a strange book full of strange ideas and insights. Take a mixture of (American style) sex, philosophy, religion, clinical medicine, academic research, mix gently in the mind of an anonymous professor and, 'bubble, toil and trouble' this book will be the product.

It is a collection of short stories, each of which is a Gothic novel in miniature in which supernatural or horrifying events, some of which are not impossible to envisage, are recounted.

An arrogant materialistic surgeon is effectively cursed by an aggrieved relative. A scientist races to develop a vaccine against a religiously elaborated pandemic. The presence of something, 'the unseen' of spontaneously aborted fetuses is used to effect a possession. A mixture that confirms beneficial integration on to individuals is developed with interesting consequences. A medical school faculty which decides to close itself down. An immunologist realises that the (and his) immune system is outside conscious control, but develops enough insight into his immune system to realise that he is infected with a retrovirus. An anosmic professor develops a female genital perfume, whose odours make females feel terrific, but leads to reproductive and sexual disininterest in females, and which is also a sexual turn-off for males.

All this is the product of an unusual mind. The author uses a pseudonym, WHY? Is it because the characteristics and behaviour of some of his anti-heroes are derived from those of his colleagues? I think we need to know; if this is the case they have to be stopped!

Who should read this book? Those with a penchant for the bizarre, those who enjoy the essence of Kafka and Edgar Allan Poe here transmogrified to the American academic medicine scene. Such readers should also have an ample supply of faith, hope and charity available.

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