Advances in Pineal Research, Volume 4, edited by R.J. Reiter and A. Lukaszyk. Pp. ix + 270, illustrated. John Libbey, London, Paris, Rome, 1990. Hardback £32.50.

This volume represents a collection of submitted papers from invited speakers at an International Workshop entitled 'Sites of Action and Effects of Pineal Hormones' which was held in Poznan, Poland in September 1989. In the midst of Europe's most dramatic social revolution for a generation, the world's leading pinealologists gathered to discuss recent developments in the understanding of this somewhat neglected gland. The result is far from seamless with ample evidence for the lack of desktop publishing software and laser printers in the former Communist States of the East. Western contributors would also have been well advised to run spell-checks on their chapters before submitting them for direct publication. The book aims to be of widespread interest to a variety of scientists. However, the pineal seems to have fallen a long way in the order of priorities since its Cartesian heyday as the putative 'seat of the soul' and it is difficult to envisage anybody but the most dedicated pinealologist attracted to some of the more exotic chapters. A more general introduction would have been helpful in this respect. The early neuroanatomical and

neurophysiological chapters are somewhat repetitive but there is fascinating work presented on the localization of melatonin receptors. There is little, if any, in the way of molecular biology in this volume, and the incorporation of state of the art techniques is clearly an avenue for expansion in the field. The absence of a true disease of excess or deficiency (the *sine qua non* of endocrine disorder) means that the pineal will forever be banished to the sidelines of clinical interest and indeed there is little in this volume to attract the attention of a general clinician. Nevertheless, some of the later contributions on melatonin's action on immune responses suggest therapeutic consequences that will be worth following. Despite aiming for a comprehensive account the book makes no mention, for example, of the vast literature on the role of melatonin in psychiatric disorders such as seasonal affective disorder and depression: indeed a sad omission. Finally a word of caution. Editors should not be tempted to present their acknowledgements in verse. Poetry, like pinealology should be left to the professionals.

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Books Received

The Family Practice Desk Reference, 2nd Edition, edited by C.E. Driscoll, E.T. Bope, C.W. Smith, Jr and B.L. Carter. Pp. 700. Mosby Year Book, St Louis, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, London, Philadelphia, Sydney, Toronto, 1991. Paperback, £27.50.

Genetics and Human Nutrition, edited by P.J. Randle, J. Bell and J. Scott. Pp. 210, illustrated. John Libbey, London, Paris, 1990. Hardback, £32.00.

Handbook of British Anaesthesia, edited by Graham Smith. Pp. 140. British Journal of Anaesthesia, 1991. Paperback, £14.95.

Liberating Medicine, David Seedhouse. Pp. xxi + 160. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, New York, Brisbane, Toronto, Singapore, 1991. Paperback, £11.95.

Management Skills for Doctors: An Evening Seminar Series, Pp. 150. Wessex Medico-pharmaceutical group, 1990. Paperback, £12.00.

Medical Disorders During Pregnancy, William M. Barron and Marshall, D. Lindheimer. Pp. xiv + 630. Mosby Year Book, St Louis, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, London, Philadelphia, Sydney, Toronto, 1990. Hardback, £57.00.

Nutrition Matters for Practice Nurses: A Handbook On Dietary Advice for Use in the Community, edited by A. Leeds, P. Judd and B. Lewis. Pp. 152, illustrated. John Libby, London, Paris, 1990. Paperback, £10.50.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind – Mental Illness: Who Cares?, The MSD Foundation. Pp. 47. 1991. £5.00.

Regional Anesthesia, 2nd Edition, W. Hoerster, H. Kreuscher, H. Chr. Niesel and M. Zenz. Pp. 300, illustrated. Mosby Year Book, St Louis, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, London, Philadelphia, Sydney, Toronto, 1991. Hardback, £64.00.