Book Reviews

A World Guide to Infections – Diseases, Distribution, Diagnosis, Mary E. Wilson. Pp. 769, not illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 1991. Hardback, £80.

Many books devoted to tropical (and infectious) diseases and geographical medicine already exist. What then set the author of this substantial volume, from Cambridge, Massachusetts, on this tack? The *raison d'être* was 'to provide a ready source of information about which diseases were possible (in clinical practice in the USA) based on what the patient could provide – i.e. signs, symptoms, and a history of exposures.' 'Often the countries with the richest array of infectious disease problems were those most lacking in published data.' The book consists of three sections: the patient (history and common clinical findings, for example, fever, diarrhoea, and eosinophilia), the place ('an infectious disease profile for every geographical area of the world'), and the diseases (key features presented in a standard format).

The first section contains a wealth of information – arranged within a symptom/sign-orientated classification; there is more detailed information than in most texts on tropical/geographical medicine. Section two lists those countries (using a complicated system of coding) where various infections exist; this is followed by notes on those present in a particular geographical location. The third section contains notes about specific infections, and a few selected references. Most of the information in the appendices could have been included in the text; the index is adequate.

The sum total is a book midway between a tropical–geographical medicine text and a good medical dictionary. The author is to be congratulated on the enormous industry – but I for one shall continue using the better tropical medicine texts which usually do not give such clear guidelines on precise distribution of an infection, but provide greater detail.

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Laboratory Medicine – Test selection and interpretation, edited by J.H. Howanitz, P.J. Howanitz *et al.* Pp. xvii + 966, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, New York, Melbourne, Tokyo, 1991. Hardback.

The welcome intention is to help the clinician request the appropriate test, in the proper container, at the best time, and interpret the result correctly.

The 45 co-authors cover chapters on chemistry tests, haematology, microbiology and blood transfusion. Tests are handled in a standard manner mentioning the collection container, any special requirements, the reference range or other indicated values, followed by a review of the causes of change.

I found a wealth of readable information within the remit, while the experts keep their feet on the ground, stressing that external influences can cause erroneous results.

The inevitable wish to be comprehensive has included the protein bound iodine which should be discouraged on grounds of health and safety, not to mention accuracy and precision, and yet the cholinesterase section is skimpy about genetic variations and Scoline sensitivity. I would like a more critical approach with attempts to establish protocols of investigation.

There is duplication, inevitably, but in a book on test selection and interpretation there is no requirement for pages of exquisitely coloured plates, or staining techniques, or haematology introductions of 20-30 pages. The book is not aimed at pathologists.

Who would use this well-produced book? The authors say clinicians, residents, students and laboratory workers. As a book of lists it could well be used by the student. I doubt if it would interest GP colleagues.

The intent will be worthwhile if clinicians accept there is no perfect test, and the more tests you request the more likely it is that you will unearth a result outside the reference range.

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Diagnostic Bronchoscopy: A teaching manual, edited by Peter Stradling. Pp. 185, 521 illustrations. Churchill Livingstone, London, Edinburgh, Melbourne, Tokyo, New York, 1991. Hardback, £70.

The sixth edition of this excellent work on bronchoscopy has been updated. The main advantage of this edition is the inversion of photographs and accompanying diagrams in recognition that most bronchoscopies are performed by the use of a fibre optic bronchoscope with the operator facing the patient. This should ease interpretation of appearances for those who are just gaining bronchoscopy experience. The clarity of the photographs (obtained by rigid bronchoscopy) is as always excellent. There have been relatively few modifications to the text. The chapter on 'indications for bronchoscopy' and the author's views on the advantages of rigid bronchoscopy and disadvantages of fibre optic bronchoscopy make interesting reading and reflect the author's enthusiasm for this procedure. The chapter on the techniques of using both types of bronchoscopes is very clear both in text and diagrams. There is relatively little attention paid to HIV infection and perhaps bronchoscopic appearances may be included in future editions.

This book is well written, superbly illustrated and amply fulfills its function as a teaching manual and should certainly be read by bronchoscopists in training.

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Annual Review of Public Health, Volume 12, 1991, edited by Gilbert S. Omenn, Jonathan E. Fielding and Lester B. Lave. Pp. vii + 585. Annual Reviews, Inc., Palo Alto, California, 1991. Hardback, \$45.00 USA and Canada, \$50.00 elsewhere.

This volume is an interesting medley of epidemiological studies, health promotion, and health service management. Many important areas of public health are covered including infant mortality, trauma and injury, occupational health and low back pain. The epidemiological reviews of the health effects of low-level exposure to lead, cancer risks of radon and man-made vitreous fibres, Lyme disease and smoking control programmes are very comprehensive with over 100 references – a marvellous starting point for anyone wishing to get rapidly abreast of these subjects. UK readers interested in resource allocation and the costs of health care services will discover several descriptions of the US and Canadian experience, although they may find it difficult to generalize from the lessons learnt and apply them over here. Finally, for the more numerically inclined, there are methodological chapters on health surveillance; competing risks and cohort effects on mortality analysis – an interesting addition for those concerned with modelling disease trends and setting targets for the year 2000. Scattered throughout most of the chapters are tables and graphs giving comparative international data, but these are seldom more up to date than 1987. Overall, a readable book with a valuable selection of recent advances in public health for clinicians and public health doctors alike.

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An Aid to Paediatric Surgery, 2nd Edition, edited by R.A. MacMahon. Pp. 267, 125 illustrations. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Tokyo, Melbourne, New York, 1991. Paperback, £15.95.

Paediatric surgery inevitably but regrettably occupies a small place in the undergraduate curriculum. Regrettable because a significant proportion of children attending the general practitioner's surgery or hospital paediatric department will have a surgical problem either as the presenting complaint or as an incidental finding. The availability of a textbook which is short in length, easy to read and contains opinions which are widely accepted is of particular value to medical students, but also to paediatric and surgical junior staff.

Professor MacMahon and the experienced international team of contributors have covered the whole range of paediatric surgery. Inevitably some of the subjects are covered very briefly but each chapter concludes with suggestions for further reading. Chapters on child abuse, paediatric sports medicine, major trauma and ethics in paediatric surgery are included and serve to indicate the very wide range of subjects covered. Some of the chapters are problem orientated, for example, abdominal pain, gastrointestinal bleeding, tumours, and some have an anatomical basis, for example, body wall defects, the face and oropharynx. This tends to result in information on some subjects being scattered and others being covered under unexpected headings, for example, spina bifida in the chapter on body wall defects.

The index is good but undoubtedly the ideal way to derive maximum benefit from this book is initially to read

it from cover to cover rather than use it purely as a reference manual.

It has been aimed at medical and paramedical students to provide a basic, easy to read, easy to remember textbook. Used as described above it fulfills that aim and copies should be available in medical school and hospital libraries.

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Annual Review of Microbiology, Volume 45, 1991, edited by L. Nicholas Ornston. Pp. xi + 657, not illustrated. Annual Reviews Inc., Palo Alto, California, 1991. Hardback, \$41 USA and Canada, \$46 elsewhere including P&P.

Your reviewer has an impossible assignment. In this daunting volume, the topics range from genetically engineered baculoviruses as agents for pest control to chaperone-assisted assembly and the molecular architecture of adhesive pili. Our branching disciplines are yet again in an exponential phase of growth, and the complexities are bewildering. I bless Ralph Wolfe for his paper on 'My kind of biology'. Here is a thrilling and generous account of teamwork in most difficult territory. Wolfe sought in his work to create an atmosphere in which students could develop. The record is wonderful testimony to his success.

Because of my own respect for J.P. Duguid's work on bacterial fimbriae (a term that has scientific priority and established provenance, sadly not honoured in much transatlantic literature), I turned to Hultgren, Normark and Abraham's stimulating review on the exploitation of modern scientific approaches to the study of adhesive heteropolymers. It is encouraging to see how hitherto impossibly complex biological systems are yielding their secrets to our advancing expertise and technology.

The review by Wang and Wang of viruses of the protozoa gives us a glimpse of developments in a neglected field. There are other good virological papers on the hepadnaviruses and hepatocellular carcinoma, on V-Z virus latency, and on aspects of HIV.

For mycologists, there are papers on nuclear fusion in yeast, mechanisms of natural resistance to human pathogenic fungi, and virulence factors of *Candida*. For the reader with an open mind, there is a mine of information and stimulation. There is much that I did not know about and cannot understand. It is splendid.

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The Esophagus, edited by D.O. Castell. Pp. 800, illustrated. Little Brown & Co. London, Boston, Toronto, 1991. Hardback £105.00.

This book reviews, in over 800 copiously illustrated pages, all aspects of oesophageal disease. References to literature continue up to 1990, but the advance of endoscopic surgery has been so rapid that it receives no mention. The book is well produced and accurately