Book Reviews

Handbook of School Health, 17th edition, Issued by the Medical Officers of Schools Association. Pp. xvii + 236, illustrated. Trentham Books, Stoke-on-Trent, 1992. Paperback £18.95.

This is the 17th edition of a handbook first published in 1885 and written for doctors working mostly in private schools. It retains the traditional sections that have been useful to past generations of school doctors (myself included) on travel advice, the incubation and exclusion periods of communicable diseases and comments on immunizations. The chapters on contractual and administrative arrangements for school doctors are also helpful.

It is a shame that an immunization summary published in 1992 does not mention Hib vaccine, nor any of the newer typhoid vaccines for travellers. The section on meningococcal meningitis is incorrect. Since 1988, doctors have been advised to give parenteral penicillin to all suspected cases of meningococcal meningitis prior to urgent admission to hospital. Details about prophylaxis in schools and definitions of those at risk of secondary infection would be more useful in a handbook than comments on hospital management.

However, it is in the coverage of more modern conditions that this book shows its age. Health promotion in schools is not limited to the teaching of first aid. Sex education must cover advice on safer sexual practices including the use of condoms. Bullying in schools is more common and serious than the short section in the book implies. Depression and suicide are tragic causes of mortality in adolescents. Suspected child abuse is difficult to manage, complicated by the legal implications and requires sensitive and skilled handling. I winced at the avuncular statement 'school doctors are often able to "winkle out" the truth'.

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General and Systematic Pathology, J.C.E. Underwood. Pp. 847, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, London, New York, Melbourne, Tokyo, Edinburgh, 1992. Paperback £29.95.

Professor Underwood and colleagues have succeeded in producing a textbook of pathology which covers, in sufficient detail, nearly all aspects of that subject. The book (just over 800 pages of text) is divided into two parts.

The first part covers general pathological processes. It is up to date and clearly written. It is nice to see, in these days of high-tech molecular biology, as much space given to explaining the differences between clot and thrombus as is given to discussing PCR. In addition to the usual treatment of standard topics such as inflammation,

healing and repair, there are several innovative sections, such as the pathology of bedrest and low flow infarction. These will be of value to students trying to appreciate basic principles underlying disease.

The second part of this book deals with the diseases affecting each of the major systems. Each chapter starts with a brief description of the normal structure and function of the organ involved and I found this very useful. There are many splendid colour photographs and the use of clinical pictures, X-rays and scanning images should appeal to the less pathologically minded medical students.

I have very few criticisms to make. There is the occasional poor quality photograph, for example, Figure 7.1, and a few typographical errors, but I admit this is only nit-picking.

In summary this is an excellent book with few weaknesses and well worth the price. I can recommend it not just to medical students, but also to those studying for their MRCP and FRCS exams.

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Colour Atlas of the Foot in Clinical Diagnosis, M. Zatouroff and L.E. Bouffler. Pp. 255, illustrated. Wolfe Publishing, London, 1992. Hardback £70.00.

The foot is hardly the most glamorous part of the body and it has probably been neglected by doctors as much as by artists. This atlas is a welcome attempt to counter some of this neglect. To begin with what it is not: it is not a textbook of chiropody, nor is it a book about the foot in isolation. For this Wolfe already publish McMinn's *Atlas of Foot and Ankle Anatomy*. Rather it links the foot to general medicine – its role in clinical diagnosis. It is not a book of general medicine either, for which one of its authors has already offered atlases of 'Physical Signs' and of 'Diagnostic Picture Tests' but a complementary volume.

The illustrations are superb and ethnic minorities are well represented. The authors claim that it will be of value not only to practising clinicians, but to all health professionals concerned with foot care. I think they are right.

The first chapter has a simple theme repeated many times through the book: the need for good observation, the active searching for clues. One looks at the whole person and at the feet as a part of that person. A survey of the normal foot follows. I found this immensely useful. The effects of footware and simple mechanical problems in the foot may not contain the intellectual challenges of molecular biology, but they are important in daily medical practice: I cannot be the only doctor who has never been taught them. Here the book plugs a gap. Full marks for this!

The second part of the book is concerned with the presentation of systemic disease in the foot. This has been a popular approach in the teaching of dermatology and of