Recent Advances in Haematology, No. 6, edited by A.V. Hoffbrand and M.K. Brenner. Pp. ix + 235, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, New York, Tokyo, Melbourne, 1992. Hardback £29.95.

It is a matter of personal choice how haematologists decide to keep up to date with advances: the options lie between attempting to read the original work on every topic which is becoming impossible; or relying on summary articles as provided by *Recent Advances in Haematology* or *Seminars in Hematology*, both of which are excellent.

This sixth volume in the Recent Advances series is 226 pages long and summarizes 11 recent growth areas in haematology: judging by the reference it was written in 1991. The topics covered range from basic research to advances in clinical practice and are particularly useful for practising clinicians. Good editorial control has resulted in a consistent lay out and well-written articles, which are readable: especially Dr Hutton's clear account of new developments in the detection of haemostatic disorders. The text reflects the received truth and the references are fairly comprehensive, I also found it particularly useful to have a comprehensive index included at the back of the book.

A small criticism is the lack of enthusiasm shown for deoxycytosine and 2-chlorodeoxyadenosine in the treatment of hairy cell leukaemia: since the advantages of these drugs over alpha interferon were obvious by 1990 (*Lancet* editorial). I was also surprised to see alpha interferon being seriously considered as front line treatment for essential thrombocythaemia and polycythaemia vera. However, these are small criticisms of an excellent book: our department subscribes to the Recent Advances series which I strongly recommend.

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Smoking and the Young, A report of the working party of the Royal College of Physicians. Pp. xi + 130, illustrated. Royal College of Physicians, London, 1992. Paperback £10.00.

The publication in 1962 of the Royal College of Physicians first report on *Smoking and Health* was a landmark event; *Smoking and the Young* is the fifth report. It deals with the issue of smoking in young people – the effects of maternal smoking on the fetus, impairment of the health of young children by 'passive' smoking, and the recruitment of children to 'active' smoking (which is vital to the tobacco industry if it is to replace the 300 'customers' who died every day from smoking).

It is estimated that each year, 4,300 spontaneous abortions, 420 perinatal deaths and 17,219 hospital admissions in children under 5 years are attributable to 'passive' smoking. As in adults, 'active' smoking quickly leads to early pharmacological dependence on cigarettes, through the addictive effects of nicotine.

The recommendations of the Report include a total ban

on tobacco advertising, an increase in cigarette price, improved education of young people about the harmful effects of smoking, and stricter control of retail sales and of non-smoking areas.

The crucial effect of peer group influences is acknowledged as is, sadly, the lack of evidence of effectiveness of methods of helping young smokers to stop. A non-smoking adult population would make smoking less attractive to the young and Sir Richard Doll is quoted as saying that, as long ago as 1953 'it was quite clear to me that the (tobacco) industry knew that as long as young adults are smoking, and providing role models for children, it didn't matter how much you tried to educate children not to smoke, because they would not take any notice.'

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Infectious Diseases – Colour Guide, A.P. Ball and J.A. Gray. Pp. 115, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, London, New York, Melbourne, Tokyo, Edinburgh, 1992. Paperback £7.95.

This book is genuinely pocket-sized and is proposed as a user-friendly format for exam preparation, and as a resource for students and health care specialists in all fields of medicine. Its 153 illustrations cover a very wide range of infectious and associated conditions.

The different diagnoses appear to be presented in a fairly random order, being neither systemic, alphabetic, or related to the type of rash or presentation of the disease. Nevertheless, the 153 illustrations cover a wide range of infectious and associated conditions and, for the most part, are of good quality. A few of the X-rays, notably of tuberculosis of the spine, and of chickenpox pneumonitis, appear not to have reproduced very well, and the illustration of jaundice in infectious mononucleosis does not demonstrate the jaundice as the sclerae are obscured.

The basic pathogenesis, clinical features, and complications of the diseases are methodically and briefly presented. Constraints of space prevent much discussion of treatment, and little mention is able to be made of resistant organisms, though these are an increasing problem in British practice. Two things which it would have been nice to see included in this book are a section on malaria, which does not appear, although enteric fever does, and a mention of quadruple therapy in the tuberculosis section.

I would recommend this book, particularly to medical students and junior doctors, as a useful *aide memoire* and revision book, although, as with all book of this type, a lack of space sometimes causes aspects of discussion to be scant, and the absence of malaria from the repertoire of diseases discussed is a pity.

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