Book Reviews

Urologic Surgery, edited by J.E. Fowler. Pp. 734, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, London, Edinburgh, 1992. Hardback £120.00.

This book is a well-constructed, comprehensive guide to operative urology. The contributors are almost exclusively American urological surgeons chosen for their particular experience and expertise in the surgical procedures they describe. Each chapter is followed by special comments either by the editor or by other well-known urologists which serve to enhance the contribution by expanding and elaborating upon areas considered to be of particular importance. This is therefore more than just an atlas of surgical technique. The line diagrams and illustrations are outstanding but the text describes patient selection, preoperative investigation and preparation together with postoperative management. Most authors discuss possible complications and include advice on how to avoid them or how to deal with them if they occur. There is no chapter on laparoscopic urological techniques but this has been evolving while this book was being compiled. Each chapter concludes with a list of references for suggested further reading. This is a beautifully produced and illustrated textbook with the editor's own chapter on radical retropubic prostatectomy setting the very high standard that is achieved throughout.

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Textbook of Endocrine Physiology, J.E. Griffin and S.R. Ojeda. Pp. viii + 351, illustrated. OUP, USA, 1992. Paperback £16.95.

I enjoyed reading this short, concise, and very well written introduction to the 'Physiology of the Endocrine System'.

This book undoubtedly merits very high marks. Although a cardiologist by training, being a professor of medicine I enjoyed reading this book which gave me a new insight into endocrine physiology. The authors have clearly stated that the book is meant for undergraduate students. Having studied endocrine physiology through this book I can recommend it even to doctors taking the membership examination.

The format, the printing, and the overall get-up of the book are excellent. A detailed index at the end is a great help for ready reference to the user. This book should find a place in every medical school library.

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Screening and Surveillance in General Practice, C. Hart and P. Burke. Pp. 416, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Milan, New York, 1992. Hardback £49.50.

Preventative medicine is now seen as an increasingly important part of general practice. Significant developments have taken place since *Screening in General Practice*, the predecessor to this volume, was published in 1975. The word surveillance has been added to the title to reflect the increased scope of screening in the 1990s.

Although the majority of the authors are general practitioners, a multi-disciplinary approach has been adopted with contributions from academics, specialists and community physicians where appropriate.

The book is divided into seven sections, the initial two covering the history, theory, economics and ethics of screening as well as the practical problems encountered; there is a particularly important chapter on the use of computers. The next four sections cover the great majority of screening procedures currently undertaken in general practice, classified according to the age of the target group. This 'state of the art' review summarizes current knowledge and practice in commendable depth.

The final section explores the role of screening in preventing illness caused by a patient's lifestyle. This is an innovative section indicating many possible areas for future development.

Although the book is written for general practitioners, workers in other disciplines will find much of value. It is a practical handbook as well as a valuable source of reference; all practices should possess a copy.

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Spinal Cord Dysfunction, Volume III, L.S. Illis. Pp. xii + 360, illustrated. Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 1992. Hardback £50.00.

This is the third in a series of scholarly multi-author monographs on the spinal cord edited by Dr Illis. Volume I covered assessment, Volume II intervention and treatment and the present volume discusses the theory, practice and results of spinal cord stimulation. Illis himself contributes a section on spinal cord recovery after injury and the background to spinal cord stimulation which admirably sets out our present understanding in this area and should be required reading for trainees in neurology. There are highly technical sections on the theoretical and experimental aspects of spinal cord stimulation and then a series of reviews of the clinical usefulness of peripheral nervous system and spinal cord stimulation. The basis and justification for the use of spinal cord stimulation in chronic pain, spasticity and bladder dysfunction is discussed. Their conclusions remind clinicians who practise away from centres where spinal cord stimulation is routinely performed of the place of these techniques in the management of patients when conventional pharmacological techniques have failed. A final chapter reviews the relationship between spinal cord stimulation and spinal opiodergic activation. This is not an everyday book for

the physician or even general neurologist but is a mine of information about a specialized and developing field.

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Psychology in Medicine, I.C. McManus. Pp. 125, not illustrated. Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 1992. Paperback £14.95.

Many doctors remain sceptical of the nature and purpose of psychology and, in particular, of its role within medicine. Nonetheless, in recent years systematic education in psychology and behavioural science has become *de rigueur*. This book provides an introduction to the basic processes of psychology and their general and specific applications to medicine.

On doctor-patient communication Dr McManus makes the point that whereas the majority of doctors think that they are good communicators, a majority of patients are dissatisfied with the outcome of consultations. Answer: communication skills can be improved by effective teaching.

On diagnosis, he informs us that diagnosis rarely uses deductive logic but, instead, uses inductive logic to make diagnosis from imprecise, uncertain, probabilistic data. Answer: Bayes' Theorem can be used by computer programs to calculate the probability of particular diseases given that particular symptoms are present, and computers can be more accurate at diagnosis than physicians.

On drugs, he tells us that drugs do not only have actions because of their pharmacological effects, but also because of their symbolic actions and the expectancies associated with them. The prescription of a drug is not based only upon strictly medical criteria but is also a response to a social situation.

The specific applications of Psychology in Medicine are concerned largely with behavioural problems such as smoking and alcohol addiction, eating and obesity, and psychiatric disorders. There is little on general practice, heart disease, cancer or neurological disorder.

Overall, the material is long on theory and short on application, but it is a workman-like effort and compares with its competitors in the undergraduate market.

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Oxford Textbook of Pathology, Volume 1, edited by James McGee, Peter G. Isaacson and Nicholas Wright. Pp. 792, illustrated. Oxford University Press, 1992. Paperback £45.00.

This book forms the first part of a two volume set and examines the principles of pathology. As the editors state in their preface, defining the science of pathology is not

easy and they have taken a broad view of what should be included. The ordering of the subject matter is fairly traditional – cell + subcellular structure, inflammation, infection, neoplasia, vascular pathology, etc. – but the editors have assembled a formidable list of contributors so that most sections are written by recognized experts in their field.

Each section is concise, yet sufficiently detailed to encompass the important facts of each subject. Where facts are few, or unclear, the authors make this clear. Photomicrographs, electron micrographs and line drawings are numerous – most are very good indeed. The sections are ended by a list of further reading that would provide a good introduction to further study of the subject.

The book is not small and the index which covers both volumes runs to a further 103 pages. It is a very good index and its compiler(s) deserve praise.

The preface suggests that the book is aimed at trainee and established pathologists. I think the editors may be selling themselves short and that this volume would be of considerable interest to many biomedical scientists, medically qualified or not.

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Critical Care Toxicology, edited by R.S. Hoffmann and L.R. Goldfrank. Pp. 256, not illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, New York, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, Tokyo, 1991. Hardback £22.50.

Volumes in the series Contemporary Management in Critical Care are published quarterly and aim to provide concise surveys of topics of current interest in critical care medicine. This volume deals with critical care toxicology and succeeds admirably not only in this aim but also in its specific objective, that is, to allow intensivists to approach the problems of management of poisoned patients through the eyes of experienced clinical toxicologists.

There is a predominance of authors from New York (11 of 19), not surprisingly because this is the provenance of the volume editors. The topics dealt with are well chosen. Early chapters focus on general principles: utilization of the intensive care unit, toxicokinetics, use of activated charcoal, extracorporeal drug removal, the role of sodium bicarbonate, and immunotoxicology. Later chapters deal with difficult issues of management: the approach to the agitated delirious patient, the management of the haemodynamically compromised poisoned patient, smoke inhalation, and corrosive substance ingestion.

The first chapter on rational use of the intensive care unit is a useful though wordy account. The chapter on toxicokinetics is excellent, particularly since hard data are still sparse (this is sometimes reflected in rather circum-spect drafting, for example, 'may be predicted to be'), and contains many interesting ideas though sometimes the concepts are described rather simplistically, for example, methaemoglobin is said simply to 'draw cyanide off' cytochrome oxidase in the context of cyanide poisoning.

The chapter on activated charcoal is a little uncritical with an apparently unwavering acceptance throughout