Book Reviews

The Renin–Angiotensin System, Vols 1 and 2, edited by J. Ian S. Robertson and M. Gary Nicholls. Pp. Vol. 1, xvi + chs. 1–51, Vol. 2, xvi + chs 52–100, illustrated. Gower Medical Publishing, Kent, 1993. Hardback, £150.00.

The Renin–Angiotensin System is a remarkable achievement. Here within two handsomely produced volumes are scholarly and readable accounts, richly referenced, of the historical development of our understanding of the RAS and the current state of knowledge and uncertainty. Volume 1 deals with biochemistry and physiology and Volume 2 with pathophysiology and therapeutics.

Thanks to the editorial arm-twisting detailed in the preface and liberal cross-referencing the 100 chapters are extremely well integrated with very little duplication.

Whilst inevitably the book will be of special value for clinicians in hypertension, nephrology and endocrinology, there are few in other specialties who will not find chapters of interest.

The editors are to be congratulated for having produced an instant classic. No medical library or self-respecting department of nephrology, endocrinology and others should be without their 'Robertson and Nicholls'.

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Coping Successfully with Prostate Problems, R. Reynolds. Pp. 134, illustrated. Sheldon Press, London, 1993. Paperback £5.99.

This book attempts to explain in lay terms the urinary symptom complex caused by prostatic enlargement, how the symptoms are investigated and the treatment options available. Almost half the book then addresses the operation of prostatectomy, that is, chapters on waiting for surgery, your hospital stay, and your recovery at home. If this book is written to be read by men with bladder outflow obstruction due to BPH then my major complaint is the persistent use of the word 'pee'. What is wrong with the term 'to pass urine'? That is what patients actually say to their medical adviser. There are some terms used, for example, 'microscopic' that would not be understood by the average patient and are not explained in the glossary or index. The advice to the reader with symptoms to write them all down on a piece of paper to produce at the time of consultation is not a good idea. This is almost guaranteed to cause the heart of any clinician to sink and is well described by our colleagues over the channel as '*the maladie de petit papier*'. In the chapter dealing with 'your hospital stay' it is carefully explained why certain questions are asked by the surgeon and their importance even if repetitive. The value of the

careful history is then totally negated by stating that it is the tea ladies who asked the most pertinent questions. This might just upset the dedicated urological team concerned with the patients' management. This book, however, is not of course directed to them, but I wonder whether the average man awaiting prostatectomy would necessarily tackle a paperback of this size.

This is very readable, well researched and contains a lot of common sense, practical advice and information. Perhaps, the 'nurse learner', as student or pupil nurses are now called, might prove to be the best market for this book.

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MCQs for the F.R.C.S. Examinations in Applied Basic Sciences, J. Pegington, F.J. Imms, D.R. Davies and P.B. Boulos. Pp. 105, illustrated. Hodder & Stoughton, Kent, 1993. Paperback, £12.99.

This book provides a useful bank of 175 MCQs in anatomy, physiology, pathology and surgery. It is designed for the F.R.C.S. examinations, but many of the questions are equally appropriate for undergraduate medical examinations in these subjects. They will therefore prove useful to staff setting a range of MCQ examinations as well as to candidates preparing for the F.R.C.S. As the authors point out, it is impossible to set questions of this kind without some ambiguities, but those in this book are both unusually free of ambiguities and do not fall into the trap of attempting to test complex knowledge that is best tested by different types of examination.

The questions are all of the true/false type and therefore have the merit of simplicity. The brief preface describing how questions of this kind are marked and evaluated is clear, and will be useful to staff and candidates alike.

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Introduction to the Blood–Brain Barrier, H. Davson, B. Zlokovic, L. Rakit and M.B. Segal. Pp. 335, illustrated. Macmillan Press, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 1993. Hardback, £55.00.

This book is a detailed introduction to all aspects of the blood–brain barrier. Hugh Davson, the senior author, is