

questions and space for written answers. Clearly, those interested in palliative care and who enjoy such an approach will respond enthusiastically to the appearance of the first unit in a new series. I was not clear, however, as to the target audience. Reference is made to the whole team but this guide seems to be focused more narrowly on medical needs.

The Open Learning Guide comes in two parts – one about pain management and the other ‘five whole patient case studies’. The main text is written by two doctors; the case studies compiled by five others. The authors’ decision to abandon the WHO three-step analgesic ladder and to minimize the place of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs casts doubt on the general applicability of this learning aid.

The whole series is the combined creation of a hospice medical director, director of studies, nurse tutor and an expert in open learning. Each of the five planned guides will, presumably, cost £33. A sixth, about the management of lymphoedema, is also promised before the end of 1994. Further guides are planned for bimonthly publication thereafter and will include two for relatives, three on teaching methods, two on more advanced pain and symptom management, and one on hospice management. Clearly innovative and based on considerable expertise and enthusiasm, only time will tell whether they will gain a permanent niche in the educational market.

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**Radiology and Imaging for Medical Students.** D. Sutton. Pp. 270, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, London, New York, Edinburgh, Tokyo, 1994. Paperback, £17.50.

Any book that brings radiology to the attention of the student is to be welcomed as formal exposure to the subject in most medical schools is limited. This book is one of a series that covers the subject from student level to the consultant radiologist. The physical basis of X-rays, ultrasound, CT and MRI are well described in the first chapter. Subsequent chapters consider the various systems of the body and the book finishes with a section on interventional radiology. Most sections start with a list of possible radiological investigations followed by a description of various diseases. The need for a systematic approach when viewing a radiograph is emphasized in the chest section and this helps to avoid guessing at a diagnosis rather than analysing the signs.

The text generally covers most topics well, although the relative importance of some of the older investigations is rather over-emphasized. For instance most radiologists would normally perform CT of the chest to identify nodes rather than a barium swallow.

Radiology is a study of images and the illustrations in the book are generally good, although some would benefit from an accompanying line drawing particularly for a student audience. Some MRI images are included but one or two of the ultrasound images are looking a little old.

The book itself fits neatly into the pocket of a student’s white coat, is a useful introduction to radiology and will

hopefully encourage the student to take a further interest in imaging.

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**Advances in Pineal Research, Volume 7,** edited by G.J.M. Maestroni, A. Conti and R.J. Reiter. Pp. 306, illustrated. John Libbey, London, Paris, Rome, 1994. Paperback, £32.50.

The pineal has been subject to intense debate, and more recently research, from the time of Descartes onwards. While we appear to have moved on a little from the location of the seat of the soul in the pineal, this small midline organ remains enigmatic. Its detailed biochemistry and neurochemistry has been thoroughly explored, but physiologically, other than some form of involvement in reproductive seasonality and breeding, its precise role is essentially unknown. This is particularly true in humans. Nevertheless, the intense research continues, and the present volume represents the results of a recent symposium which is published in the ‘Advances in Pineal Research’ series. This particular volume addresses itself to the relationship between the pineal and the immune system, with particular reference to cancer. It seems only a matter of time before the pineal gets a look in to the burgeoning field of neuroimmunomodulation, and this present volume is full of fascinating studies from the major players in this area. For a symposium publication, the book is remarkably well printed and publication as a paperback has also led to a relatively low price. While clearly addressed to experts within this field, this particular volume will be extremely useful to anyone wishing to explore this particular area of pineal research.

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**MCQ Practice Papers,** P.G. Elliot. Pp. 181. Pastest, Cheshire, 1993. Paperback, £12.50.

The multiple-choice question paper is the part of the examination for membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners which engenders the most anxiety and pessimism amongst candidates. To many the task of preparing for what appears to be a test of global knowledge seems impossible. Advice as to how to do so comes in all shapes and sizes but always includes exhortations to practice with past questions.

The RCGP protects its pool of questions, so originals are not available unless you have member friends with photographic memories. This book, however, provides five complete mock examinations written by a current