

Books

Ask the Doctor. Hypertension

By Vincent Friedewald. Pp. xiv + 120. R59.95. Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel. ISBN 0-8362-7022-3.

As the title indicates, this slim book is written expressly for the patient with hypertension. Americans are among the most health conscious people in the world and have been subjected to a barrage of information on hypertension since the early seventies. The mass media approach has had definite benefits in terms of declining mortality rates from stroke and coronary artery disease, but there is recent evidence (NHANES III) that even in 1995 only 60% of patients are aware that they have hypertension and only 25% have their blood pressure controlled below 140/90 mmHg. Hence there is real need for ongoing education of the community in general and the patient in particular.

This book is directed at the literate patient. In South Africa it could be used by care givers, both doctors and nurses, to explain many of the myths and realities about hypertension to individual patients, as well as form the basis for group education. The content is largely based on the Joint National Committee recommendations published in 1993 (JNCV) and the author faithfully follows these recommendations with the exception of those concerning the preferred antihypertensive drugs. The author discusses all the major classes as potentially equal drugs of first choice, perhaps anticipating the JNC VI recommendations which are about to be published. Apart from this bias, the information is scientifically solid and put across in a readable fashion. The drug brand names are American, but generic names are given and there is a useful chapter entitled 'What can you do to help control the cost?' This puts drug costs, costs of blood tests and lifestyle modification into perspective. Each chapter is concluded with a section called 'It's your turn' which highlights the questions commonly asked by patients. There are useful chapters on 'What is hypertension? What can you do for yourself?' and on special populations, such as children, people suffering with diabetes mellitus and pregnancy. There is a very practical chapter on home blood pressure monitoring, what instruments to use and how to evaluate the home readings.

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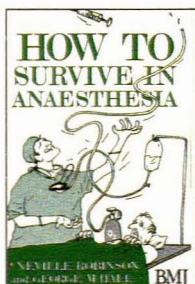
Overall it is an informative book, well written and factual, pleasantly brief and inexpensive (R59.95), but in South Africa, apart from a small cross section of the hypertensive population, it is better directed at doctors and nurses who will use the information to educate their own patients.

F J Milne

How to Survive in Anaesthesia*

By P Neville Robinson and George M Hall. Pp. xi + 172. £22.00. 1997. London: BMJ. ISBN 0-7279-1066-3.

This book has been written for new trainees in anaesthesia and contains a wealth of core anaesthetic information. It is not intended to replace a basic anaesthetic textbook. Although the text is didactic, it is laid out in an easy to read manner with numerous summary boxes to highlight key points. It is a pity that more illustrations were not used.



The book is divided into three sections. The first part concentrates on airway management, vascular access, choice of intravenous fluids, the anaesthetic machine and monitoring. The second part discusses various anaesthetic crises and complications, whilst the third part considers anaesthetic aspects relevant to some of the common surgical specialities. It also covers preoperative evaluation and principles of regional anaesthesia. Omissions in a book of this size are inevitable. There is for instance no mention of the anaesthetic management of the diabetic or hypertensive patient and no mention of the porphyric patient.

The book is recommended for trainee anaesthetists or undergraduates in anaesthesia and will not break the budget. It will make a useful addition to the library of any hospital training medical students in anaesthesia or new trainees to the speciality. It will also be useful for anaesthetists preparing for the Diploma in Anaesthesia.

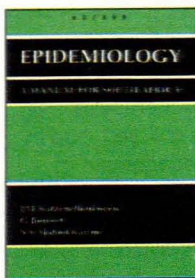
Peter C Gordon

Epidemiology. A Manual for South Africa*

Edited by J M Katzenellenbogen, G Joubert and S S Abdool Karim. Pp. 295. R120. 1997. Cape Town: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-571308-7.

Epidemiology provides a vital background to the work performed by both students and workers in the health care field, but it often presents a daunting challenge to those who have little or no experience of epidemiology. This comprehensive, multi-author manual attempts to address this problem.

The editors opted for a comprehensive introduction to epidemiology presented in a practical format. The aim of



making the manual user friendly has been achieved by a logical layout and clear, simple language. It is refreshing to find a text on epidemiology focusing on local conditions and I was pleasantly surprised to find a chapter devoted to the ethical aspects of epidemiological research. With the emergence of democracy in South Africa, and a developing human rights culture, this chapter is both necessary and timely.

The manual, a refinement of material gathered over many years, takes the reader from the process of protocol development to specific content areas as diverse as environmental epidemiology and health economics. Certain statistical concepts could do with further exposition, but one must credit the editors with the fact that they acknowledge this and the comprehensive bibliography (chapter linked) goes a long way to compensate for shortcomings in the text.

This manual is highly recommended to any person with a limited knowledge of epidemiology or venturing into the field for the first time.

P G D Rautenbach

Books received

The receipt of these books is acknowledged, and this listing must be regarded as sufficient return for the courtesy of the sender. Books that appear to be of particular interest will be reviewed as space permits. The Journal does not publish unsolicited reviews.

1997/8 Lifestyle Food Index for South African Consumers.

Edited by Jacqui Greenop and Valda Strauss. Pp. xx + 716. R34.95. Bedfordview, Gauteng: Demeter Publications (Pty) Ltd. ISBN 0-620-20432-X.

Refugee Health. An Approach to Emergency Situations.* By Medecins Sans Frontieres. Edited by Germaine Hanquet. Pp. 380. £5.85. Basingstoke, Hampshire: MacMillan Education Ltd. 1997. ISBN 0-333-72210-8.

Pain Relief in Labour.* By Robin Russell, Mark Scrutton and Jackie Porter. Edited by Felicity Reynolds. Pp. ix + 252. Illustrated. £11.00. London: BMJ. 1997. ISBN 0-7279-1009-4.

The New Dictionary of Medical Ethics.* Edited by Kenneth M Boyd, Roger Higgs and Anthony J Pinching. Pp. xii + 285. £11.00. London: BMJ. 1997. ISBN 0-7279-1001-9.

Nitrogen Oxides.* 2nd edition. Environmental Health Criteria No. 188. Pp. xxiv + 550. SwFr92/US\$82.80. Geneva: WHO. 1997. ISBN 92-4-157188-8.

Di-n-butyl Phthalate.* Environmental Health Criteria No. 189. Pp. 205. SwFr27/US\$37.80. Geneva: WHO. 1997. ISBN 92-4-157189-6

Xylenes.* Environmental Health Criteria No. 190. Pp. xvi + 147. SwFr30/US\$27. Geneva: WHO. 1997. ISBN 92-4-157190X.

Acrylic Acid.* Environmental Health Criteria No. 191. Pp. xviii + 106. SwFr27/US\$24.30. Geneva: WHO. 1997. ISBN 92-4-157191-8.

Flame Retardants: A General Introduction.* Environmental Health Criteria No. 192. Pp. xvii + 133. SwFr29/US\$26.10. Geneva: WHO. 1997. ISBN 92-4-157192-6.

A Cabinet of Medical Curiosities. By Jan Bondeson. Pp. ix + 250. Illustrated. £10.95. London: I B Tauris Publishers. 1997. ISBN 1-86064-228-4.

Epidemiology for the Uninitiated.* 4th edition. By D Coggon, Geoffrey Rose and D J P Barker. Pp. 69. £11.00. London: BMJ. 1997. ISBN 0-7279-1102-3.