
Books/Boeke

Concise ear, nose and throat booklet instructs with questions and answers

Ear, Nose and Throat Disease. Ed. by K. P. Gibbin and P. Bradly. Pp. 156. Berlin: Springer-Verlag. 1989.

Formats of multiple-choice questions are a proved and useful means of testing knowledge. A poor score certainly encourages one to return to the more formal text book and delve deeper. Gibbin and Bradly from Nottingham intend this concise ear, nose and throat disease booklet to be used primarily by general practitioner trainees, medical students, house officers and nurses undergoing post-basic training. In this they certainly succeed, although I doubt that the nurses need the depth of knowledge required to answer these questions, unless they are total in-depth addicts to the contentious nursing process.

The questions reflect the tenor of the British approach to ENT, not the more comprehensive American approach followed in this country, but nevertheless achieves their aims, aspirations. They are practical and relevant, and some explanatory notes are given to clarify the answers.

The booklet is handy, deals with the ear, nose and throat and part of the head and neck, albeit in limited fashion, and will certainly be of great practical use to the readers in the categories for whom it has been designed.

J. Steer

Political psychology

The Psychology of Politics. 2nd ed. Ed. by William F. Stone and Paul E. Schaffner. Pp. xi + 331. DM 64. Berlin: Springer-Verlag. 1988.

This second edition (published 15 years after the first) is intended as an updated introduction to political psychology and describes the growing interest, developing theoretical perspectives and diverse research methods in this field.

In the first chapter Ginneken provides an outline of the cultural history of political psychology. He reminds us that political psychology, just like any other social science, is the outcome of long historical, cultural and intellectual processes. He illustrates this by describing how national crises have prompted theorists to conceptualise problems in particular ways which have often been subsequently discarded by others rather than adopted on an international scale; the reason being that the selection of any theory is guided both by objective criteria of 'truth' as well as by inter-subjective criteria of 'fit' with dominant world views within an era, country or class. Thus all of these historic choices (which include focusing on certain aspects of reality while ignoring others) include an arbitrary element; so while individuals may feel that their conceptual framework and research techniques have enabled them to construct an underlying reality, it may just as well be that they are engaged in the construction of a superimposed reality that enables them to make sense of the bewildering complexity of psychosocial life in their own preferred way.

Experience, behaviour and interaction constitute the subjective elements of individuals and are part and parcel of each person's unique existence in history and society. Political psychology attempts to make an objective study of political subjectivity, but Ginneken points out that it must be conceded that we may never be able to completely understand the political choices people make; and the purely objective study of political subjectivity may represent an unattainable ideal. The truth for each of us will always remain a partial truth and may often look totally false in the eyes of political adversaries.

Attention is drawn to attempts by right-wing political psychologists to prove that many liberals have rebellious personalities and are wishful thinkers about the future, and to attempts by left-wing political psychologists to prove that many conservatives are worshippers of the past, with authoritarian personalities. Self-proclaimed middle of the road political psychologists have tended to portray moderates as well informed and realistic, and radicals as ill-informed and fanatical. Similarly, politically active people have labelled the apolitical as zombies, and contrasting enemy images have been constructed — one person's terrorist is another's freedom

fighter. Different political positions mobilise different emotional and cognitive patterns and caution is advocated in ratifying any particular position or sticking pathological labels on ideological adversaries.

Ginneken concludes by pointing out that just as it is difficult to make totally value-free scientific judgments so it is difficult to adopt completely neutral political positions when undertaking research in political psychology. He questions whether political psychology will be an instrument of social control and ideological legitimation (as it has often been in the past) or whether it may make a contribution to enlightenment and emancipation (as it might do in the future).

The other 10 chapters by the two authors explore the social nature of man, personal attributes (character, attitudes and socialisation, psychology, ideology and motivations to politics) political thought, political conflict and change, nuclear war and processes of social change. There is considerable focus on conflict, particularly international conflict.

The authors acknowledge that they have a social constructionist perspective, which affirms that the reality we all experience is shaped by social consensus and expressed through agreed upon terms of understanding. This is illustrated by describing the strikingly different political psychologies constructed by liberal and conservative thinkers over the past 100 years. These show how political behaviour, political actions and reactions are all conditioned by the historical context, the political culture, current events and the immediate situation. Interactions between (a) the person as the central focus of these influences, (b) motives as important components of personal character, (c) issues such as rationality and irrationality at the individual and mass level, (d) the role of the mass media and (e) the question of stability and change in public opinion, are all addressed. Finally, the powerful point is made that central to the possibility for future survival is our ability to live on earth without destroying each other. The nuclear threat has profoundly influenced the lives of people in more advanced nations and political psychology is increasingly focussing on the evolution of political institutions and traditions at the global rather than the national level in order to defuse conflict and prevent mass annihilation.

The fascinating complexities of human behaviour in the political sphere unravelled in this book will ensure its interest to those who wish to develop a deeper insight and feeling for man's struggle to couple personal self-interest to community development and a better understanding of the extent of social change required to improve the quality of life for all in the world.

S. R. Benatar

Gesinsgids vir gesondheid

Bly Fiks en Gesond: 'n Gesinsgids tot 'n Gesonde Lewe. Ed. deur Gordon Jackson. Pp. 77. Geïllustreer. Kaapstad: Tafelberg. 1989.

Die skrywer van hierdie sakformaat boekie oor fiksheid en gesondheid is 'n internis met 'n belangstelling in hartsiektes, diabetes, asook die effek wat dieet en oefening het op die gesondheid. Die outeur het daarin geslaag om oefeningsfisiologie en die reaksie van die liggaam op verhoogde fisieke aktiwiteite in redelik eenvoudige terme en met 'n mate van insig te verduidelik. 'n Mens sou verwag dat hy as geneesheer meer aandag sou wy aan die invloed wat oefening het op die verloop van 'n verskeidenheid van sieketoeënde, maar dit word baie oppervlakkig gedek.

Heelwat aandag word gegee aan die gesondheidsvoordele wat onderskeie sportsoorte soos stap, draf, fietsry en swem inhou, asook enkele aanmerkings op spansportsoorte, met 'n vergelyking van die fiksheidswaarde wat die onderskeie sportsoorte inhou. 'n Waardevolle bydrae is die afdeling oor lewenslange fiksheid wat

oefening tydens die verskillende lewensfasies in perspektief stel.

Die boekie is ryklik geïllustreer met kleurfoto's en verduidelikende sketse. Soos die meeste vertaalde oorsese publikasies, dui die foto's onmiskenbaar aan dat dit nie alles van toepassing is op Suid-Afrika nie (ons hardloop nooit deur die sneeu met handskoene aan en stap selde met reënjasse in die reën tydens voetslaanekspedisies). Die foto's helder egter die teks op en dra by tot die visuele aantreklikheid van die boek.

Alhoewel die boekie nie beskou kan word as 'n gesaghebbende publikasie oor die wetenskaplike waarde van oefening vir gesondheid nie, is dit tog 'n waardevolle leke-publikasie wat geskryf is teen 'n mediese agtergrond en wat groot inslag behoort te vind onder die gesondheidsbewuste algemene publiek. Enige publikasie wat 'n gesonde leefwyse voorstaan te midde van die gesondheidsbedreigende Westerse leefwyse kan met vrymoedigheid aanbeveel word.

D. P. van Velden

Human physiology

Human Physiology. 2nd ed. Ed. by R. F. Schmidt and G. Thews, transl. from German, by M. A. Biederman-Thorson. Pp. 825. Illustrated. DM 128. Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag. 1989.

With a plethora of excellent textbooks on human physiology available, is there room for yet another? Clearly the publishers think so. But then again, this book is the standard text for all German medical schools and hence in its original language must have a large and replenishing market. The possibility of it breaking into the English-speaking market was tested in 1983 with the first edition. It must have been successful for the publishers to produce this second, completely revised and expanded text. The data suggest, therefore, that the book reaches a part of physiology not reached by other books. What this part is, is not clear, but on inspection the book gives an impression of order, clarity, precision and comprehensiveness not equalled by the texts more readily used by English-speaking medical students. Moreover, its comprehensive content is covered in fewer pages than, say, in Guyton, which should attract today's hard-pressed medical student.

The book's positive features are numerous: well-ordered, well-referenced, clearly printed, filled with excellent illustrations, and multi-authored yet with a uniformity of style that reveals the skills of master editors, few could quibble with either the content or its attractive packaging.

Readers of reviewers' reviews also require, however, that their reviewer is critical, so does the book have any negative features? Two criteria can be used to test this, and both criteria are measures of how up to date the book is. Firstly, are the authors as well informed about your special interests as you are? Inevitably, with single-author volumes the answer is no. Multi-authored books like this one fare better in the test, but I would say that this book achieves a standard somewhat lower than might be expected. In confirmation of this assessment, the second criterion judges the recentness of sources. The sources of information used by the authors of this book are textbooks and handbooks on the one hand and original papers and reviews on the other. The textbooks and handbooks were mostly published in the 80s, and the late 80s at that. The papers and reviews used were published mostly before the 80s. The content, therefore, is about 7 - 10 years behind modern knowledge, instead of the more usual 4 - 5 years for this type of book.

Despite this, however, the book compares well with others in the first course in physiology market. Teachers of such courses and their students could easily buy worse books, could not easily buy a better one, but perhaps should not go too far out of their way in order to get it.

G. Mitchell

Human behaviour

Human Behaviour. Ed. by E. Nash, B. Stoch and G. Harper. Pp. viii + 621. R69. (excl. GST). Kenwyn: Juta. 1990.

This book is a revision and update of a previous edition published in 1984. Second editions often provide an indication of the value of a book as well as an opportunity for its improvement. Improvements offer the opportunity of updating and correcting errors, providing a new perspective and also for introducing new topics to the current edition. The present edition of this book, although remaining a basic text, succeeds well in this regard. To give cohesion to this task, the book has been organised around three concepts: human development over the life-cycle; basic psychological functioning, which follows the order of the mental state examination; and various conceptual models of human behaviour organised as a hierarchy of systems within a range of clinical contents. To this effect the book is divided into 4 parts and 36 chapters. Part 1 (chapters 1 - 7) deals with theories of human development; Part 2 (chapters 8 - 16) is based on the previously discussed theories and describes human development over the life cycle; Part 3 (chapters 17 - 27) considers basic psychology in relation to medicine; and Part 4 (chapters 28 - 36) examines perspectives of human behaviour in the context of disease and medical practice.

Contemporary comprehensive health care involves physical, psychological and social care, that is, incorporating the biopsychosocial model and bridging the mind-body dichotomy that has existed in health care in the past. In an attempt to do this, medical practice as well as medical education have undergone many changes recently. Psychology is taught to many health care students and has been increasingly integrated within a prescribed syllabus in a number of related health care professions. Most medical schools nowadays include psychology (or the behavioural sciences) in the undergraduate curriculum, the relevance of which becomes clearer once the student progresses from the preclinical years to obtaining first-hand experience of clinical professional life. The title of the present book suggests a focus on these issues and therefore assumes an interesting and important relevance in contemporary health education. The authors manage to straddle the biopsychosocial continuum with considerable perceptiveness and expertise.

In addition, each chapter is introduced with specific learning objectives in mind. These learning objectives provide a baseline of what the student should know once the contents of the relevant

chapter have been digested and mastered. To facilitate this exercise, cross-references are provided at the close of each chapter. Since the book was designed to be used in the education of both junior and senior health care professionals, users are encouraged by the text to set up their own course goals and learning objectives to meet the needs of students and trainees. The general layout of the book enhances this.

It is generally accepted that concepts facilitate communication and social interaction and that they are effective in promoting understanding of guidelines of behaviour, particularly in coping with disease. Given the need for this, Part 4 in the book provides a sound basis for understanding such concepts. The hierarchy of conceptual models examined ranges from the biological, somatic, psychological and family, to the social and cultural. Special attention is given to the application to patient care of the various explanatory models, either simultaneously or in series. Again, the authors' goals are achieved in this regard. Of particular importance here is the brief discussion of illness behaviour (which consists of activities that people undertake when they are ill and then perform to define their state of health and to seek suitable remedies). Additional components of behaviour related to disease, illness and health are also discussed. These include topics on clinical interviewing and diagnostic problem-solving, ways of seeing an ill person, and various models in illness, including the importance of a cultural model which is vital to enhance understanding of cultural aspects of health and illness in a country such as South Africa. There are some reservations though, which include irksome spelling mistakes ('preceeding' should read 'preceding' on page 199, etc.) and unclear formulations. Examples of the latter include: the discussion on page 199 of the decline in intelligence during ageing due to general neuropsychological deterioration, which is stated to occur in the 5 years before death; the reference on page 199 of the verbal sub-tests of the WAIS which assumes that the average reader knows that this abbreviation stands for a specific intelligence test; the apparent equation of 'paramedical' with 'para-professional' on page 373 and the subsequent outdated concept that certain professional health-care disciplines such as clinical psychology are paramedical disciplines; confusing statements such as 'the surgical specialities, closest to many para-professionals . . .' on page 373 and 'people like us . . .' on page 380; the inconsistent use of gender pronouns with frequent references to his/her and he/she followed by 'she' as on pages 373

(referring to para-professionals) and 374 (referring to physiotherapists); and so on. These and other examples do not, however, detract from the overall value of the book as a teaching aid and basic reference.

In summary, this volume contains a series of introductory chapters on a variety of topics of human behaviour which are of special interest, as well as some chapters that offer more in-depth examination of special areas of significance to medicine specifically and health care professionals in general. The usefulness of the book and the practical guidelines are augmented by an update of the understanding of much of the basics of what is currently

known in the field of human behaviour as it relates to professional health care. It is therefore also of value to practitioners outside the teaching establishment. In organising and analysing their data as they do, the authors manage to present and discuss a large number of factors associated with the topic under discussion and at the same time provide an overview as well as efforts to connect the varied factors. All in all, this is a reader-friendly book recommended to those interested in the relationship between human behaviour and medical practice.

L. Schlebusch

UCT Medical School's 75th

UCT Medical School at 75. Ed. by R. Kirsch and C. Knox. Pp. 356. Illustrated. Cape Town: Department of Medicine, UCT. 1987.

This delightful book celebrates the 75th birthday of the UCT Medical School in 1987. Ralph Kirsch and his co-editor put together a pot pourri of 58 contributions of varying length and style. It is not another historical text, but it reflects the develop-

ment of the Faculty by some who helped to shape it and others whose recollections provide an enjoyable record of the spirit, the people and events. Apart from enjoying the book, readers will also be pleased to know that the proceeds of its sale go to the Medical Library at UCT.

J. P. de V. van Niekerk

Nitrate assimilation

Molecular and Genetic Aspects of Nitrate Assimilation. Ed. by John L. Wray and James R. Kinghorn. Pp. xv + 410. Illustrated. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1989.

This well-produced book reports the proceedings of the Second International Symposium on Nitrate Assimilation — Molecular and Genetic Aspects, held at St Andrew's University, Scotland, in June 1987. As such its prime audience will be those workers in the field of plant biochemistry specialising in the assimilation of nitrogen by higher plants and microbia. Its central theme concerns the activities of those two pivotal enzymes, nitrate reductase and nitrite reductase, which are primarily responsible for introducing unreduced inorganic nitrogen into the biomass, and reveals the great strides that research in this field has recently made with the introduction of modern molecular and genetic technology.

The book is made up of 24 contributed review articles organised into six broadly based parts entitled Nitrate uptake, Nitrate reduction, Nitrite reduction, Regulation of nitrate assimilation, Applied aspects and Comparative aspects.

The first and shortest section, Nitrate uptake, considers the uptake of nitrate by higher plants and reveals how little is still known about the molecular mechanisms which mediate this process and the genetics that control the expression of the inducible enzymes responsible for the influx of nitrate into the plant.

The second section contains 12 contributions providing a wealth of information concerning the reduction of nitrate. In these papers the genetics of the nitrate reducing enzymes are explored and compared in such divergent groups as bacteria, cyanobacteria, yeasts, filamentous fungi, algae, monocots and dicots, using information provided by techniques including Northern/Southern blots and DNA:DNA / DNA:RNA hybridisation, DNA sequence analysis, mutant complementation, and functional analysis of

control regions. The structure, immunology and recent developments in the molecular biology of nitrate reductase are also discussed by leading authorities in these respective fields.

The third section contains four contributions on nitrite reduction in bacteria and higher plants. Reviews of the biochemistry and genetics of nitrite reduction in these groups are provided, including excellent articles on the structure and reaction mechanism of spinach nitrite reductase. Also included in these papers is a full discussion on recent research into the molecular cloning and nitrate regulation of the spinach nitrite reductase structural gene.

The fourth section considers the regulation of nitrate assimilation in filamentous fungi and higher plants. It discusses the involvement, in molecular terms, of positive-acting regulating genes whose products mediate nitrate and ammonium regulation in these fungi, but which appear to be absent in the higher plant.

Applied aspects of the fungal and higher plant biotechnology developed in relation to nitrate assimilation are discussed in the penultimate section of this book, which concludes with a comparative dissertation concerning amino acid sequence relationship between bacterial, fungal and higher plant nitrate and nitrite reductase proteins. A comprehensive index to the various chapters of the book is provided, each chapter being provided with its own literature reference list.

This book is highly recommended as a well organised, authoritative comprehensive survey of recent developments in the field of nitrate assimilation which should be of great value not only to plant nitrogen biochemists but also to those interested in the application of modern molecular biological techniques to research in the biological sciences.

O. A. M. Lewis

Books received

Exercise in Health and Disease. 2nd ed. By Michael L. Pollock and Jack H. Wilmore. Pp. xiii + 741. £28,50. London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1990.

Cancer Treatment. 3rd ed. By C. M. Haskell. Pp. xv + 1098. £104. Philadelphia: WB Saunders. 1990.