

## Aviation Medicine

By Richard M. Harding and F. John Mills. 3rd ed. Pp. vii + 218. £16. London: BMJ. 1993. ISBN 0-7279-0814-6.

This is the third edition of a book compiled from a series of articles originally published in the *British Medical Journal*, and it is interesting to observe how it has developed and improved since its first appearance. The first edition looked like what it was, a collection of separate articles. But with rearrangement of the material and inclusion of new information, it has now become more useful as a *vade mecum* of practical information on aviation medicine. The main change in this edition is the addition of a chapter on the transport of patients by air, and updating of the sections on jet lag, motion sickness, in-flight crew incapacitation, cardiovascular fitness of aircrew, alcohol use by aircrew and ionising radiation.

I strongly recommend the purchase of this book to the members of the South African Aerospace Medical Society as what is probably the best current overview of aviation medicine available. It should also be on the bookshelf of every authorised medical examiner for aircrew licensing to augment the training given at the Institute for Aviation Medicine. In view of the all-pervading influence of air travel in our society, it will also be of great assistance to doctors who are being asked with ever-increasing frequency by patients and their relatives whether they are medically fit to undertake long journeys by air.

N. C. LEE

## Color Atlas of Pharmacology

By Heinz Lüllmann, Klaus Mohr, Albrecht Ziegler and Detlef Beiger. Pp. x + 369. Illustrated. DM 40. Stuttgart: Thieme. 1993. ISBN 3-13-781701-3 (Thieme). ISBN 0-86577-455-2 (TMP).

My immediate impression of this pocket-fitting Atlas was: what a nice looking book! The impression remains, and on closer scrutiny I found it to be full of often quite ingenious pictorial gems.

Every left page is a close-written, lucid text that relates directly to the colour plate on the right. The 'atlas' plates are often remarkably detailed and comprehensive and frequently provide surprisingly recent information. Inevitably, a few of the plates feel a little contrived.

The technical vocabulary reflects the German origins of the publication and introduces the reader to a repertoire of terms not often found in the British or North American medical lingo.

Because the book provides such a fresh pictorial view of pharmacology, both in its general and systems sections, it should be an insight-providing adjuvant source of information for all persuasions of health-care students who need to become familiar with pharmacology and pharmacotherapy.

For the graduate health-care practitioner it is a refreshing updater, and pharmacology tutors will find many useful ideas within the covers of this handy flexibook.

J. L. STRAUGHAN

## Falls in the Elderly

By Joanna H. Downton. Pp. 158 Illustrated. London: Edward Arnold. 1993. ISBN 0-340-54848-7.

Falls are a serious problem confronting those involved in care of the elderly. About 30% of elderly people living in the community fall each year and in old age homes the figure is as high as 50%. The consequences of falls are severe enough to result in hospitalisation in 2,5% of cases, and 50% of these are likely to die within a year.

This practical guide addresses the problems of epidemiology and the causes of falls, and discusses some difficult issues related to patients who fall, including the assessment and management of dizziness and syncope, which are handled in some detail. It is amazing how often the obvious has to be restated. We all know that 'diagnosis should precede treatment' and yet how often we succumb to the temptation of prescribing therapy when we don't know what it is that we are treating. Drug therapies are discussed where appropriate, but emphasis is placed on non-pharmacological measures, particularly prevention, including the use of walking and other aids, restraints and so on. Nursing aspects are dealt with at a practical level — after all, care of the elderly is a practical discipline.

This is an excellent little book written in an easy-to-read style and illustrated with appropriate diagrams and photographs. It would be of use to all doctors caring for older people (specialists and GPs alike) as well as nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

G. MULLER

## Books

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**Neurological Complications of Pregnancy (Advances in Neurology, Vol, 64)**

Ed. by Orrin Devinsky, Edward Feldman and Brain Hainline. Pp. xiii + 272. \$113,50. New York: Raven Press. 1993. ISBN 0-7817-0067-1 (order code 2586).

Eighteen of the book's 20 contributors are neuroscientists, so this volume reflects a predominantly neurological viewpoint with less attention to obstetric management.

For example, Table 5 in the chapter on epilepsy suggests *inter alia* that preclampsia, placenta praevia and abruptio placenta are obstetric complications of pregnancy in women with epilepsy. I can find no valid association for these and must therefore conclude that this list was compiled by a non-obstetric, uncritical review of the literature.

Much of the chapter on eclampsia by Donaldson is, predictably, directed against the use of magnesium sulphate, while little attention is paid to the underlying disease.

Of particular reference value were chapters dealing with rarer but important entities such as myasthenia gravis, multiple sclerosis, peripheral nerve problems and rheumatological disorders, including thrombotic thrombocytopenic puerpera.

Medical libraries have become increasingly specialised, and this volume will be shelved in an area seldom frequented by obstetricians. But I suggest that a visit to this volume would be worthwhile.

**BOET DOMMISSE**

**Media Advocacy in Public Health: Power for Prevention**

By L. Wallack, L. Dorfman, D. Jernigan, M. Themba. California: Sage Publications, 1993. ISBN 080 3942885 (hardback), ISBN 080 3942893 (paperback).

This book is a thought-provoking, practical guide on how to make a difference to public health using the powerful tool of media advocacy. The authors assert that because research and historical experience have established that the major determinants of health are in the social and physical environment, the power of media should be used to make that environment healthier. Media advocacy is thus part of a strategy that engages that power to exert pressure on those whose decisions influence that environment, a strategy that uses the mass media appropriately, aggressively, and effectively to support the development of healthy public policies.

The authors show that research has established a positive link between the amount of mass media coverage and placement on the public agenda, which they claim follows, not leads, the media agenda. Media advocacy is thus vital in influencing the choice of topics and shaping the public debate; a key to its success is to think globally and act locally with the support of the media.

Media advocacy differs from traditional uses of the mass media in that it relies on coalition building and community organisation to evoke a groundswell of support for action. It treats groups and individuals as potential advocates and shifts the focus from the individual (the disease-based, personalised view of problems that often leads to victim-blaming) to the environment, a universalistic approach in which health is conceived as a social issue that requires a blend of science with politics.

For media advocacy to work, it is crucial that advocates have credible data, ensure that clear goals are set for a campaign, encourage coalition building, and include long-term evaluation. They also need to know the rules and the book draws back the curtain on how the media operates, offering tips on what is news, and how to frame issues to be acceptable to the media, while ensuring that policy directions are advanced. Framing is one of the most important strategies employed in media advocacy, since the media both highlight what the issue is, and how to think about it. By using these strategies, attention can be focused on the conditions that cultivate poverty, alienation and disease in our society, and put the spotlight on those who benefit from the social arrangements that allow this to happen.

Written in a down-to-earth style, the book is eminently readable, with handy summaries at the end of each chapter. The penultimate chapter in case studies makes for stimulating, entertaining reading and gives good practical examples, sound advice, and valid reasons for the success or failure of various campaigns.

Media advocacy is in its infancy in this country, and those with the interest of public health at heart would do well to read this book now, as South Africa undergoes transition and has an impressionable public agenda. Being an advocate is not easy (indeed, media advocacy is about controversy), but using the strategies outlined in this book will fill those who yearn to make a difference with hope, and provide them with a tool to help make it happen.

**G. PATERSON  
D. YACH**

**Biological, Material and Mechanical Considerations of Joint Replacement**

Ed by Bernard F. Morrey. Pp. 492. Illustrated. New York: Raven Press 1993. ISBN 0-7817-0008-6.

This publication is the product of the seventh annual Bristol-Myer Squibb/Zimmer Orthopaedic Research Symposium, which was chaired by Bernard Morrey. Excellent contributions have been solicited from a variety of world experts, who examined biomaterials using a multidisciplinary approach.

The opening chapters focus on keynote issues and broadly address clinical considerations, biomaterials, biological implications and device function and retrieval. International experts then review the interface of cemented and uncemented implants.

Much of the book, appropriately, deals with the currently topical problem of the generation of particulate debris and the analysis of the consequent biological response. Polyethylene is analysed as a weightbearing surface, and the implications of modularity are discussed. Contributions are a little haphazard and disjointed, but are nevertheless relevant.

At times the sense of the basic science is somewhat obfuscated by the use of North American English.

The final chapters discuss the toxicology of the materials used in contemporary implants, and then consider the practical issues of manufacturing, funding and regulation.

This is a timeous publication, which re-emphasises the importance of the scientific considerations of the biomechanics, tribology and biology of joint replacement. It should be on the shelf of any scientist or surgeon who is seriously involved in the development of implants and arthroplasty surgery.

**I. D. LEARMONTH**

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## BOOKS / BOEKE

### Diagnosis and Management of Pathologic Fractures

Ed. by Joseph M. Lane and John H. Healey. Pp. 188. Illustrated. New York: Raven Press. 1993. ISBN 0-7817-0062-0.

The diagnosis of a pathological fracture relies on the history and an abnormal X-ray. In this text, the illustrations of conventional radiology are of good quality and the three main abnormalities discussed are osteoporosis, Paget's disease and metastatic disease in an American population.

To each of these subjects, a concise account of the underlying pathology is given, together with factors causing normal bone growth. The main causes of osteoporosis in both the young and the old are discussed and various methods of internal fixation recommended. In osteogenesis imperfecta the Sillence and Seedorf classifications are noted. A flaw is the recommendation of prenatal diagnosis by the use of oblique abdominal radiographs when ultrasound has superseded this modality.

In Paget's disease the use of the computed tomography (CT) and to a lesser extent magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) are mentioned but not described or illustrated as modalities for defining the severity of the disease. Fracture management, both conservative and operative is discussed. This is the only sclerotic bone condition considered and the important subject of osteopetrosis is not covered.

Malignant bone conditions with their treatment, removal and fixation at various sites after fractures are described. Apart from the spine, the use of CT and MRI is again not seriously considered. This is an important omission since they are essential in any modern pre-operative assessment of the extent of neoplasia. For the rest of the conditions in which pathological fractures occur, benign developmental and tumorous conditions, which may occur in 43% of children (author's quoted figure), are given only a short final chapter.

The book is recommended as a useful and readable review for radiologists or orthopaedists who deal with the diagnosis and treatment of these conditions.

B. J. CREMIN

### Surgery for Spinal Cord Injuries

Ed. by Steven R. Garfin and Bruce E. Northrup. Pp. 329. Illustrated. New York: Raven Press 1993. ISBN 0-07817-0075-2.

Injuries to the spine and spinal cord with their devastating consequences continue to plague individuals from all walks of life. Paralysis of limb must surely rank among the worst sequelae of any injury. If there is any way in which we doctors can reduce the chance of further cord damage to the spine-injured patient, we must take cognisance. This book covers the surgical treatment of spinal injuries, the main focus here being the stabilisation of vertebral fractures.

The editors have obtained the assistance of 46 orthopaedic surgeons, neurosurgeons and anaesthetists, specialists in their field of spine trauma from the USA, Canada, the UK and Europe. They have compiled a comprehensive manual on the principles and techniques in spine surgery as they relate to spinal injuries. Developments in this field in the past few years make this a timely publication.

The book is one of a series covering principles and techniques in spine surgery, which thus far has included works on lumbar discectomy, lumbar interbody fusion, micro-

surgery of the lumbar spine and anterior cervical spine surgery. The text covers the controversy of the timing of surgery in patients with spinal cord injury and the various syndromes seen in partial spinal cord damage. There are excellent chapters dealing with the intra-operative evaluation of the patient, using somatosensory and motor evoked potentials, ultrasonography and intra-operative myelography. The evolving techniques for the monitoring of spinal cord function during surgery may play a major role in improving the results of surgery to the spinal cord in future. The chapter by Kalkman and Drummond is an encouragement to surgeons, anaesthetists and neurophysiologists to pursue this difficult task for the benefit of their patients. The chapter by Glenn Anderson on minimising blood loss during thoracolumbar spinal surgery is very worthwhile and could well be read by any surgeon.

Fifteen of the 26 contributions take the reader through many surgical manoeuvres used in the decompression and stabilisation of the spine from craniocervical junction to the lumbar spine. Generally, topics are well covered and provide many useful 'how to do it' insights. Because of the multi-author nature of the book, there are a few instances of duplication in the chapters chosen by the editors, but few omissions in the topics covered. The chapter on surgical management of spasticity should have been complemented by a similar discussion on the management of pain in the spine-injured patient, however. Most chapters are well referenced. The book has 989 references in all and the index is comprehensive and well constructed.

One must accept that gremlins will creep into most publications. I found one in Fig. 5, chapter 4, where two radiographs did not illustrate the point intended by the author. The chapter on central venous pressure as it relates to blood loss, discusses the many different systems used to support patients during spinal surgery, yet provides only three illustrations in the text. Greater attention to illustrative detail would have been an advantage.

I highly recommend this book, which should be available as a reference work in any unit involved in the management of spinal injuries, be read by all orthopaedic and neurosurgical trainees, and included in the library of all spine surgeons.

R. L. MELVILL

### Books received November 1993

**1,3-Dichloropropene, 1,2-Dichloropropane and Mixtures. Environmental Health criteria. No. 146.** (English, French and Spanish summaries). Pp. 261. \$40.2. Geneva: WHO. 1993. Order No. 1160146. ISBN 92-4-157146-2.

**Methyl Parathion. Environmental Health Criteria. No. 145.** (English, French and Spanish summaries). Pp. 224. \$36.2. Geneva: WHO. 1993. Order No. 1160145. ISBN 92-4-157145-4.

**Electromagnetic Fields (300 Hz-300 GHz). Environmental Health Criteria. No. 137.** (English, French and Spanish summaries). Pp. 282. \$44. Geneva: WHO. 1993. Order No. 1160137. ISBN 92-4-157-1373.

**New Functional Aspects of the Suprachiasmatic Nucleus of the Hypothalamus.** Ed. by Hachiro Nakagawa, Yutaka Oomura and Katsuya Nagai. Pp. vii + 264. Illustrated. London: John Libbey. 1993. ISBN 0-86196-329-6.

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