

very happily spent there with fishing, rowing and swimming. He was a keen reader and well informed about early South African history.

Altogether, it was a pleasure to have worked with Mick and he is greatly missed. We have happy recollections of him.

Books

Emergency Medicine: A Comprehensive Review

Third Edition. Edited by Thomas Clarke Kravis, Carmen Germain Warner and Lenworth M. Jacobs, Jr. US\$265. New York: Raven Press. 1993. ISBN 0-7817-0045-0.

This text book reflects the increasing importance of the developing speciality of accident and emergency medicine in modern health care. It is over 1 500 pages with 87 multi-authored chapters. The majority of authors are certified in emergency medicine, but some specialised chapters are authored by physicians from other disciplines and a number have nurse authors. All the authors are American and the general chapters, particularly on planning and legislation as well as those on spousal abuse and related issues, reflect their national importance.

There are some excellent chapters, notably those on Shock, Emergency wound management, Hazardous materials, Dangerous marine organism and Bites and stings, but interspersed are some which are of much less value. There are also some notable deficiencies such as no chapter on asthma or acute liver failure.

The general format of the chapters differs, making it difficult to find your way and read quickly. There is also considerable duplication, such as electrolyte abnormalities and ethylene glycol poisoning being repeated, and many of the chapters are sparsely referenced with few updated references. The book is now in its third edition and this duplication, lack of uniformity and missing of important diseases reflects poor editing.

This is a useful textbook as it covers many important emergency medical issues and would be helpful particularly to a junior physician practising emergency medicine. It should find its place in an emergency unit as a practice manual but would be of little value as a reference in a medical library.

P. D. Potgieter

Oxford Medical Companion

Edited by John Walton, Jeremiah A. Barondess and Stephen Lock. Pp. xvii + 1012. Illustrated. R289,99. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa. 1995. ISBN 0-19-262355-9.

How does one begin to review a book like this? Perhaps a good starting point is the Preface, which is an abbreviated version of the concept as it was originally developed by Sir Ronald Bodley Scott and Professor Paul Beeson in the

late 1970s. They recognised the public's burgeoning interest in medicine, so they proposed an Oxford Companion, to be prepared 'in encyclopaedic format: a comprehensive reference book covering the knowledge base and the practice of medicine for both health professional and laymen'. They agreed that the book would contain essays as well as shorter entries drawn from a substantial headword list.

Due to the untimely death of Bodley Scott, the project lay fallow, but recently Walton took on the task of senior editor and it was resurrected. The first edition in two volumes was published in 1986.

The second edition has been considerably revised, and slimmed down into one volume. It has been updated with entries on new topics, and new biographies.

The entries run the whole gamut of medicine from hospitals in the UK to keyhole surgery, and from electrotherapy to women in medicine. It contains references to personalities such as Glauber (of Glauber's salts), W. Somerset Maugham (who, though medically qualified, never practised medicine), Sir James Paget (Paget's diseases of bone and the nipple) and Herman Snellen, who developed the visual acuity chart.

Many diseases and other conditions are discussed, including such subjects as pain, epilepsy, motion sickness and shock.

The illustrations are, however, a disappointment. There are not many, and they are all in black and white (either photographs, reproductions of paintings or line drawings). One must, of course, consider the cost of colour plates, and the introduction of colour would probably have doubled the price of the book.

The compilers of this volume are distinguished in medical circles: John Walton is Honorary Consultant Neurologist, Oxford District and Regional Hospitals, and is Editor of the 109th edition of *Brain's Diseases of the Nervous System*; Jeremiah Barondess is the Chairman of the New York Academy of Medicine; and Stephen Lock is the former Editor of the *British Medical Journal*.

As is to be expected in an Oxford University Press publication, the language is superb, and the text is written in an impeccable, easy-to-read style.

This book is a valuable source of knowledge for medical practitioners and anyone embarking on a research project or requiring information about the history and practice of medicine.

Two very useful sections are, in the front, an alphabetical list of the main sections covered in the book, and at the back, a comprehensive list of medical abbreviations.

All in all, this is a delightful excursion into medical matters.

F. N. Sanders

Idiopathic Generalized Epilepsies

Edited by A. Malafosse *et al.* Pp. xxii + 519. Illustrated. £45. London: John Libbey. 1994. ISBN 0-86196-436-5.

The European tradition of epileptology continues in this volume, the product of a conference held in Alsace in 1993. It is predominantly a work for the basic scientist, the brunt of the book being devoted to the pathogenesis of the various forms of epilepsy. A wide variety of subjects is covered, from changes on a molecular level to the

anatomical structures implicated in seizure spread.

Wada's synopsis is particularly useful, although much of it involves work on kindling in the amygdala and the effect of lesions on the ipsilateral claustrum; however the rationale behind the inclusion of this in a book devoted to idiopathic generalised epilepsies is less clear, although, as Loiseau points out, our present method of 'splitting' of syndromes into partial and generalised may not be scientifically valid.

Excellent reviews on the mechanisms of absence seizures are presented, but the chapters dealing with clinical aspects of childhood absence appear to emphasise splitting of the absence syndromes to a degree which is unlikely to prove helpful.

The publication in English to Janz's original report from 1957 on impulsive petit mal is welcome, as are the overviews of the current state of genetics in juvenile myoclonic epilepsy from the groups in Los Angeles and Berlin.

It is perhaps remarkable that, despite the wide variety of animal models available, from Strasbourg rat to Senegalese baboon, more progress has not been made in determining the underlying mechanisms of epilepsy. We know the gene loci in at least five strains of mice with a spike-wave phenotype, but despite the extravagant claims of the concluding chapter on gene therapy, seem far away from putting theory into practice.

Jonathan Carr

Medical Genetics. Principles and Practice

Fourth Edition. By Nora and Fraser. Pp. xii + 449. Illustrated. London: Lea & Febiger. 1994. ISBN 0-8121-1663-1.

The fact that *Medical Genetics: Principles and Practice* has now reached its fourth edition is testimony to the popularity which it has enjoyed since it was first published in 1974. The new edition lives up to its title and it covers most, if not all, of the field of medical genetics. The rapid advances which are taking place in this discipline are reflected in the subject matter and the authors are to be congratulated on the way in which they have reviewed this vast field in a clear and concise manner.

In their Preface, the authors state that their book is intended for undergraduates in medicine and human genetics and as a reference source for health workers. Although the price is not stated, 468 glossy pages cannot be cheap and few students in Africa would be in a position to purchase this book. Equally, persons seeking information concerning common genetic disorders will be better advised to consult one of the standard texts which are devoted to the subject. If the price is reasonable, a suitable home for this book would be a medical library and, in this context, it is to be recommended.

Peter Beighton

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 *SAMJ* does not publish unsolicited reviews.

Community-based Distribution of Contraceptives. A Guide for Programme Managers. WHO. Pp. xi + 135. Illustrated. Sw.fr.32/US\$28,80. Geneva: WHO. 1995. ISBN 92-4-154475-9.

Cardiological Dilemmas. By Roger Blackwood and Bev Daily. Pp. viii + 83. £10,95. Buckinghamshire: Beaconsfield Publishers Ltd. 1995. ISBN 0-906584-40-X.

The International Medical Graduates' Guide to US Medicine. Negotiating the Maze. By Louise B Ball. Pp. xiv + 194. US\$28,95. Arizona: Galen Press, Ltd. 1995. ISBN 1-883620-16-3.

Fertility Management. Contraception in Practice. By C. J. Roux. Pp. xiii + 154. Illustrated. R49. Cape Town: Juta Legal & Academic Publishers. 1995. ISBN 0-7021-3254-3.

Explaining Cardiac Surgery. Patient Assessment and Care.* By Russell Millner and Tom Treasure. Pp. viii + 177. Illustrated. £20. London: BMJ. 1995. ISBN 0-7279-0853-7.

Clinical Echocardiography.* By John Chambers. Pp. viii + 256. Illustrated. £55. London: BMJ. 1995. ISBN 0-7279-0810-3.

Teaching Atlas of Urologic Radiology. By Sebastian Lange. Translated by Claus G. Roehrborn. Pp. 287. Illustrated. DM198. Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1995. ISBN 3-13-100261-1.

Pathology of the Lung. Second Edition. Edited by William M. Thurlbeck and Andrew M. Churg. Pp. viii + 1151. Illustrated. DM348. Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1995. ISBN 3-13-665402-1.

Update in Gastric Surgery. 11th Grenzland Symposium, Düsseldorf 1994. Edited by H.-D. Röher, J. W. Heise, P. R. Verreet and M. Varney. Pp. xiv + 200. Illustrated. DM98. Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1994. ISBN 3-13-101041-X.

Instrumented Spinal Fusion. Preoperative Evaluation, Indications and Techniques. Edited by Ralf H. Wittenberg in collaboration with Reinhard Steffen. Pp. ix + 189. Illustrated. DM98. Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1994. ISBN 3-13-100541-6.

Care and Safe Use of Hospital Equipment. By Muriel Skeet and David Fear. Pp. viii + 188. Illustrated. London: VSO Books (Voluntary Service Overseas). 1995. ISBN 0-9509050-5-4.

Cell and Tissue Protection in Ophthalmology. Edited by Uwe Pleyer, Karlheinz Schmidt and Hans-Jürgen Thiel. New Strategies in Prevention and Therapy Series: Series Editor Karlheinz Schmidt. Pp. 203. Illustrated. DM194. Stuttgart: Hippokrates Verlag. 1995. ISBN 3-7773-1133-2.

Cyclosporin in the Therapy of Renal Disease. Edited by A. Tejani. Contributions to Nephrology, Vol. 114: Series Editor G. M. Berlyne and S. Giovannetti. Pp. viii + 128. Illustrated. Sw.fr.146/US\$127. Basel: S Karger. 1995. ISBN 3-8055-6076-1.

Notices

Telectronics pacemakers and leads

The Food and Drug Administration has advised that it has taken regulatory action against Telectronics Pacing Systems, also known as TPLC, Inc., a manufacturer of cardiac pacemakers and leads due to serious and recurring Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) violations (see also *SAMJ* May 1995, p. 406).

Under the terms of the action, Telectronics Pacing Systems is restricted from distributing any product in the USA until it has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with current GMP requirements, but may still export products subject to conditions including the laws of the import country.

* Book titles marked may be ordered directly from MASA Publications, Book Department, Private Bag X1, Pinelands, 7430, tel. (021) 531-3081, fax (021) 531-4126.