

# Books

## *The First Year of Life\**

4th edition. By H. B. Valman. Pp. vi + 106. Illustrated. £14.  
London: BMJ. 1995. ISBN 0-7279-0897-9.

Decisions made in the baby's first year, from how to resuscitate and whether to breastfeed, to how to manage the feverish infant, may have an enormous effect on later life. *The First Year of Life* was the first in the popular series of ABC articles which is still published in the *British Medical Journal*, and these were subsequently collected in book form. It gives clear and concise guidance on normal development and how to diagnose and manage illness in the newborn and babies.

The book is intended for family doctors, GP vocational trainees, medical students, midwives and nurses, primarily in the United Kingdom, and it has become the standard textbook for several undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Given these achievements, any criticism would seem carping, yet a few omissions stand out. Astonishing is the fact that cigarette smoking is not mentioned as a factor in the cause of either light-for-dates babies, cot deaths or respiratory infections — and this in a book with an emphasis on prevention. Immunisation receives rather scant attention

\* 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, e-mail masact@aztec.co.za.

— surely the topic deserves a full chapter in its own right? The case for *Haemophilus influenzae* B immunisation is not mentioned, nor is hepatitis B immunisation (though the latter is not routinely given in the UK). The statement 'ready to feed bottles are used in most obstetric units' would raise a few eyebrows in UNICEF today! Perhaps this is one of the reasons why breast feeding rates in Great Britain are falling. There would be some disagreement on the recommendations for the management of diarrhoea. Why should home-made sugar and salt solutions be suitable for babies in developing countries, but not for British ones?

Also, withholding of milk and then 'regrading of feeds' is not a policy that would be recommended locally.

These criticisms apart, the book can be highly recommended. Pages from the excellent 'Parent held Record' are shown in the chapters on surveillance and growth, illustrating how information is collected from these. A number of chapters have been revised, and the one on weaning is particularly useful.

**M. A. Kibel**

### **Health-care Options for South Africa: Lessons from the UK and the USA**

By W. Duncan Reekie. Pp. x + 116. R34.95. Sandton: The Free Market Foundation of Southern Africa. 1995. ISBN 1-874930-08-2.

The formation of the NHS in Britain in 1948 was an error and if Thatcher had succeeded in returning all of it's over one million employees into the private sector, this would have been her greatest achievement. The Clinton plan for health care reform in the US was socialist. If you agree with these assertions you will probably like this new book by Duncan Reekie, Professor of Business Economics of the University of Witwatersrand. If, like the rest of us, you don't agree with these statements then there are better texts available in this field, which you will probably prefer.

The book presents a view of health care which is more conservative than virtually any country's health care delivery system. According to the author, health care is not a human right but should rather be considered as a commodity subject to normal market forces. The arguments put forward

## **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.

**Liver Innervation.** Edited by Takashi Shimazu. Pp. xii + 484. Illustrated. £60. London: John Libbey & Co. Ltd. 1996. ISBN 0-86196-535-3.

**Pain Treatment Centers at a Crossroads: A Practical and Conceptual Reappraisal.** Progress in Pain Research and Management Volume 7. Edited by Mitchell J. M. Cohen and James N. Campbell. Pp. xiii + 338. \$69. Seattle: IASP Press. 1996. ISBN 0-931092-14-0.

**Obstetrics in South Africa.\*** Edited by H. S. Cronjé, C. J. F. Grobler and A. A. Visser. Pp. 640. Illustrated. R249.50. Pretoria: JL van Schaik. 1996. ISBN 0-627-01921-8.

are fairly conventional views of the right of the ideological spectrum, the nature of which would be consistent with other publications of the Free Market Foundation. The author criticises the usual arguments for market failure in the health sector and attributes problems of supply and demand in the sector and the 'cost crisis' to monopolies, restrictive regulation, price controls and other factors which undermine the functioning of the market. Culprits include the government, the organised medical profession and the 'retail pharmacy carte.'

The book does not successfully locate lessons it purports to be learnt from the UK and the USA into the South African context. Nine of the books ten chapters are a reprint of an American text 'Government in health care: Lessons from the UK' published by the Smith Centre for Private Enterprise Studies. The final chapter attempts to introduce a South African perspective, but mainly alludes to the Medical Schemes Amendment Act rather than capturing or offering solutions to South Africa's broader health care scenario. For example, the author does not consider what the potential implications of radical privatisation initiatives in South Africa would be, and whilst believing that the introduction of internal markets in the British NHS does not go far enough, does not examine their feasibility in South Africa's public sector.

The book is fairly easy to read, short (118 pages) and inexpensive at R34,95.

**Mark Blecher**

### **Manual of Diagnostic Ultrasound\***

Edited by P. E. S. Palmer. xvi + 323. Illustrated. Sw.fr.65/ US\$58.50. Geneva: WHO. 1995. ISBN 92 4 154461 9.

Ultrasound being radiation-free and relatively inexpensive, is becoming one of the most frequently requested initial examinations in an ever increasing range of pathological conditions.

Manual of Diagnostic Ultrasound comprises contributions from an impressive list of experienced sonologists from virtually every continent.

The initial chapters deal with the basic physics of ultrasound, including Doppler, a glossary of ultrasound terminology, useful hints and advice on selection of equipment and accessories, and basic principles of scanning which include faulty technique, artifacts, quality control and coupling agents.

The remaining chapters each deal with the scanning technique of specific small parts, abdominal and pelvic organs. The technique of ultrasound-guided biopsy is also described.

Each chapter offers a comprehensive guide to specific organ ultrasound with clear diagrams of the recommended patient position and scanning technique.

The strong points of this book are the excellent ultrasound images illustrating normal anatomy and common abnormalities with useful line drawings. There are helpful hints and advice covering difficult areas where problems may arise in imaging and diagnosis.

A shortcoming of this book is that there is no description of the techniques needed to determine prostatic volume, parathyroid disease, amniocentesis and breast ultrasound.

Despite the above omissions, this is an excellent manual which offers easy reading and invaluable guidance to students and inexperienced sonographers and sonologists. The manual fulfils its purpose of providing an easy-to-read and simple text for an introduction to ultrasound, particularly in those countries where there are limited numbers of ultrasonographers available to train students.

A. T. Scher

### **National Cancer Control Programmes. Policies and Managerial Guidelines\***

WHO. Pp. xviii + 134. Sw.fr.32/US\$28.80. Geneva: WHO. 1995. ISBN 92-4-154474-0.

This publication is largely the result of the efforts of a WHO Working Group in the field of cancer control in 1991 and a subsequent meeting two years later in Canada. Its arrival in South Africa is most timely as the role players in the formulation of a National Cancer Control Policy (NCCP) for South Africa attempt to provide a framework which will enable us to join the nations of the world who have adequate and appropriate programmes in place by the year 2000.

In assessing the global burden of cancer, the authors offer a figure of **9 million cases of new cancer** each year, 5 million of which occur in developing countries. It is this latter group that is most likely to be of significance for South Africa. In 25 years, it is estimated that we will suffer 100% increase in the incidence of cancer. The four basic steps required in the successful establishment of a NCCP must be carefully considered when absorbing the implications of this figure: assessing the actual burden of cancer, identifying and assessing measurable objectives, constant evaluation of possible control strategies and choosing priorities for initial control strategies.

The initial pages provide an easy-to-read and understandable cancer 'audit' in terms of aetiology and epidemiology. These chapters, with a strong and persuasive use of data, provide sufficient evidence for the relevance and urgency of a National Cancer Control Programme.

There are four principal approaches involved in cancer control — prevention, early detection, treatment and palliative care. Each approach is dedicated a chapter containing thorough points of discussion and offering valuable and relevant guidelines upon which to act. Not only are the references clear and designed for easy access, but the overall impression of the publication is one of a most useful workbook, programme companion and essential reading for those who have a liking for a full understanding of the process of the development of a National Cancer Control Programme.

Interpretation of sections of the chapter on 'Treatment of Cancer' would be essential for a patient (currently on treatment) who was reading this book, as information is frank and honest.

The guidelines/strategic concepts regarding the establishment of a Programme are clear, orderly and encouraging, emphasising the need for core information, commitment from all parties involved and identifying realistic, as opposed to unrealistic, goals.

An indispensable handbook for those involved in the

National initiative, as well as an ideal companion for those who feel the need to be an active participant in the entire process. Browsers, with more than a passing interest in cancer as a disease, will be impressed with its easy-to-read format.

Clare Jeffrey

### **An Introduction to Medical Statistics\***

2nd edition. By Martin Bland. Pp. xiv + 396. Illustrated. New York: Oxford University Press. 1995. ISBN 0-19-262428-8

I found this to be a very comprehensive and useful text. It is extremely readable, largely due to the comfortable authority with which the author writes. This style makes the book accessible without avoiding the statistical subtleties of many of the topics. The many typos are surprising at times, but do not manage to detract from the overall value of the book.

The section on Multifactorial Methods provides a concise overview of the more common methods appropriate to dealing with medical data, and is very welcome. In general I thought that the strength of the book lay in its extensive and impressive use of examples and the meticulous cross-referencing of methods from one section to another. The array of real world examples provided is in itself a very real resource, as are the explanations of the analyses which refer, where appropriate, to the medical context of the problem being explored. The book is very strong on the basics and would provide a good grounding for students new to the science of medical statistics as well as a handy refresher for more experienced users. The exercises and solutions are particularly useful for both teachers and students.

My one gripe is that I would like to have seen some reference made to the less classical approaches to analysis of medical data, for instance Bayesian methods and the technique of mathematical modelling.

J. M. Juritz

### **Ear, Nose, and Throat Diseases. A Pocket Reference\***

2nd revised edition. By Walter Becker, Hans Heinz Naumann and Carl Rudolf Pfaltz. Edited by Richard A. Buckingham. Pp. xiv + 583. Illustrated. DM48. Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1994. ISBN 3-13-671201-1.

This pocket-sized book presents the basic essentials of ear, nose and throat diseases and as well as surgical principles to the students of post-graduate residents and colleagues already in practice. The material is presented in different types of print: basic information is given in normal type, and supplementary information is given in small print. The text has been supplemented with numerous figures as well as tables to simplify differential diagnosis. Outstanding photographs at the end are the highlights of the book as they provide clear examples of a varied array of diagnosis.

A list of handbooks, atlases and monographs are also included for further information as well as first- and emergency treatment references.

W. F. Vorster