



BOOK MANAGER'S CHOICE

Smart Health Choices: How to Make Informed Health Decisions. Judy Irwig, Les Irwig and Melissa Sweet, published by Allen & Unwin, 1999. R230 (including postage).

Evidence-based medicine is becoming increasingly important to consumers. Patients are taking a more active role in their health care, and *Smart Health Choices* provides the tools for assessing health advice, whether it comes from a specialist, general practitioner, naturopath, the media, the Internet or a friend. As a health professional, this book will aid you to understand your patients' health care needs and questions. It also points out where treatments and tests are not supported by good evidence and can, in fact, be harmful.

Book titles marked* may be ordered directly from SAMA Health and Medical Publishing Book Department, Private Bag X1, Pinelands, 7430, tel. (021) 531-3081, fax (021) 531-4126, e-mail publishing@samedical.org or jstrydom@samedical.org.

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.

The Effects of Low and Very Low Doses of Ionizing Radiation on Human Health.* Excerpta Medica.

International Congress Series 1203. Edited by WONUC (World Council of Nuclear Workers). Pp. xvi + 539. NLG 350./US \$183.50. Elsevier. 2000. ISBN 0-444-50513-X.

Efficacy and Radiation Safety in Interventional Radiology.* WHO. Pp. vi + 90. Sw.fr.31.-/US\$27.90. WHO. 2000. ISBN 92-4-154529-1.

International Classification of Diseases for Oncology. (ICD-O).* Third Edition. Edited by A Fritz, C Percy, A Jack, K Shanmugaratnam, L Sobin, DM Parkin and S Whelan. Pp. vii + 240. Sw.fr. 60.-/US \$54. WHO. 2000. ISBN 92-4-154534-8.

Pain Imaging. Progress in Pain Research and Management.* Volume 18. Edited by Kenneth L Casey, and

Catherine Bushnell. Pp. xv + 248. Illustrated. US \$89. IASP Press. 2000. ISBN 0-931092-34-5.

Advances in End-Stage Renal Diseases 2000. Renal Research Institute Seminars. Edited by NW Levin and C Ronco. Pp. iv + 120. Illustrated. CHF 112.-/DEM 145.-/US \$97.50. KARGER. 2000. ISBN 3-8055-7080-5.

Obesity: Preventing and Managing the Global Epidemic.* WHO Technical Report Series 894. Report of a WHO Consultation. Pp. xii + 253. Sw.fr. 56.-/US \$50.40. WHO. 2000. ISBN 92-4-120894-5.

Evaluation of Certain Food Additives and Contaminants.* WHO Technical Report Series 896. Fifty-third report of the Joint FAO/WHO expert Committee on Food Additives. Pp. viii + 128. Sw.fr.25. WHO. 2000. ISBN 92-4-120896-Local and regional anaesthesia.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL ANAESTHESIA

Local and Regional Anaesthesia. Fundamentals of Anaesthesia and Acute Medicine. Edited by Per Rosenberg. Series Editors: Ronald M Jones, Alan R Aitkenhead and Pierre Foix. Pp. xii + 164. Illustrated. £25. BMJ Books. 2000. ISBN 0-7279-1480-4.

This textbook is the latest offering in the excellent series *Fundamentals of Anaesthesia and Acute Medicine* in which the series editors enlist experts to contribute to each edition.

An essential part of the armamentarium of the anaesthesiologist is the knowledge and use of local anaesthetic agents. This encompasses the pharmacology of the agents, the anatomy of the nervous system and the specific block techniques.

The first part of the book explains the essential pharmacology and toxicity of the local anaesthetics. The reader is then equipped to understand the mechanisms of some of the complications that may occur when performing local or regional anaesthesia. A chapter describing the more commonly used local block follows. Several diagrams and photographs



highlighting pertinent landmarks used in the block techniques illustrate the text. Some of the techniques are only briefly described but the chapter is well referenced for the reader requiring more detail.

An entire chapter is dedicated to intravenous regional anaesthesia. This technique may prove especially useful for practitioners in rural settings. All of the advantages and pitfalls are excellently described. For the interested parties there is a chapter describing the newer spinal and epidural block techniques. Obstetric anaesthesia is well covered by the authors. The text is concluded by a detailed discussion on the controversies and complications of regional anaesthesia.

The book provides a good review of local and regional anaesthesia but is by no means a comprehensive text for the enthusiast. The book would be a handy reference for the GP performing anaesthesia in the rural setting or for candidates studying for a diploma in anaesthesia or general practice. A plus factor is the comprehensive list of references. At the recommended price of £25, this book offers good value.

Milton Raff

GLAUCOMA

Glaucoma. By Roger Hitchings. Pp. X + 222. Illustrated. £60. BMJ. 2000. ISBN 0-7279-1448-0

This single volume guide to one of the more common eye diseases sets out to highlight the importance of the subject within ophthalmology.

It defines, develops treatment strategies and assesses the outcome of treatment for the glaucomas. It also evaluates their impact both on the patient, as well as on society as a whole.

The book considers the differentiation of the different types and changing perception of what is primary open angle glaucoma. Chapters discuss the features of primary open angle glaucoma, concentrating on the optic disc, visual field, and intra-ocular pressure signs. Knowing these signs, the book looks at methods of population screening, and results of population studies. Although a large part of the book focuses on open angle glaucoma, major chapters on angle-closure glaucoma recognise the importance of this subset worldwide. Individual chapters address the important subjects of both congenital and secondary glaucomas. Treatments for the glaucomas are discussed in detail.

This discussion includes both the principles behind treatment as well as the efforts to establish an evidence base for the effectiveness of different treatments. The costs are investigated both for different treatments and in different countries. The cost to treat the patient as well as the cost of the therapy is considered such that the cost effectiveness of different treatments can be used to decide between them.

Treatment for glaucoma is no longer a matter of reducing intra-ocular pressure. The outcome should relate to preserving visual function, as well as change, or lack of it, in the optic nerve head.

All treatments can bring their own problems or side-effects and knowledge of these allows the practising physician to make valued judgements between alternatives, as well as advise the patients on risks and benefits.

The glaucomas form a heterogenous group of eye diseases, each with the potential to severely affect the lifestyle of the sufferer. This book sets out to make it easier for the general ophthalmologist to reduce the likelihood of that occurring.

The book is easy to follow, well classified and user friendly. It is well illustrated with appropriate full colour and black and white photographs as well as line drawings. These are supported by a balanced and up to date selection of references. Chapters are contributed by an international spread of experts.

This book is part of a series of ophthalmic monographs, written for ophthalmologists in training and general ophthalmologists wishing to update their knowledge in specialised areas. It provides an up to date, very clinical and practical approach to the subject.

The book will be a pleasure to own, not only because of its content, but also because of the quality of the binding and typography.

A D N Murray

IN MEMORIAM

JACK SMITH

We are sad to record the passing of Jack Smith on 19 January 2001 after a long illness. We were privileged to enjoy a long association with him over a period of 40 years.

Jack was born in Beaufort West in 1923 and educated at Wellington High School. He commenced Medicine at UCT, but his studies were interrupted by the war when he joined the Medical Corps as a Medical Orderly, serving in North Africa and Italy. After the war he returned to UCT, graduating in 1949, following which he did his internship at King Edward VIII Hospital in Durban.

Jack married Una Arnold in 1950. In 1951 he joined a general practice in Matatiele, East Griqualand. There he became a much loved family physician and as a conscientious and caring doctor until 1974. He then left general practice and joined Iscor Medical Benefit Fund in Vanderbijlpark. He spent 10 fruitful years there, eventually retiring to Pietermaritzburg.

Jack joined the Oncology Unit of Grey's Hospital in 1986 under