

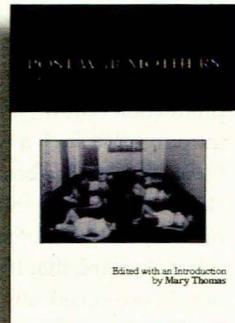


BOOKS

POST-WAR MOTHERS. CHILDBIRTH LETTERS TO GRANTLY DICK-READ 1946-1956*

*Edited with an Introduction by Mary Thomas. Pp. xiv + 247.
£35/US\$59.95. University of Rochester Press. 1997.
ISBN 1-878822-87-X.*

Grantly Dick-Read, like so many men with a mission, was a slightly aggressive and somewhat controversial character. He had a bitter and continued confrontation with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, claiming that he was entitled to membership without examination. He also felt that they opposed his ideas which detracted from the then autocratic role of the obstetrician. In 1949 he pursued a lengthy lawsuit with the South African Medical and Dental Council for specialist recognition, and practised at the Marymount Maternity Hospital in Johannesburg until 1953.



If not the originator, he was certainly the protagonist of 'natural childbirth' but, while granting women the right to involvement in their own labours, he also sometimes set unrealistic expectations with no margin for failure. His three virtues for all good women were 'patience, self-control and the ability to work hard and cheerfully when called upon'. These were not only applicable in labour but throughout motherhood!

Mary Thomas gives a brief but balanced account of his life and work against the background of early post-war obstetric practice, which was very largely 'doctor dominated'. His publications, such as *Childbirth without Fear*, were the initiating factor in the establishment of antenatal relaxing groups and classes throughout the Western world, particularly in the USA and the United Kingdom. It would also be true to say that he contributed immensely to a change in attitude, which was better for both the doctor and his or her patient.

Most of the book is devoted to some 60 letters from patients in the USA and the UK, but strangely not South Africa, to Grantly Dick-Read, requesting advice or describing their experiences in childbirth. To each he replies with encouragement and practical or philosophical advice.

These letters and responses tend to be repetitive and rather tedious, but as a historical record and a tribute to a controversial figure who was indeed ahead of his time, it is a

well-merited publication. However, at R350, it is unlikely to feature in many private book collections.

Boet Dommissie

ADVANCES IN NEUTRON CAPTURE. VOLUME I: MEDICINE AND PHYSICS. VOLUME II: CHEMISTRY AND BIOLOGY

*Edited by Börje Larsson, John Crawford and Regin Weinreich. Pp. 1356. Illustrated. NLG 625/US\$359. Elsevier Science. 1997.
ISBN 0-444-82781-1.*

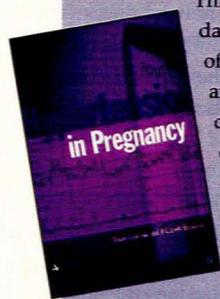
These two books are a must for all workers in the field, certainly for all scientists with access to suitable reactors and accelerators, and the majority of Radiation Oncology, Radiobiology and Medical Physics Departments.

The books report on 268 abstracts of the Seventh International Symposium on Neutron Capture Therapy for Cancer, and out of 268 abstracts, already 36 concerned clinical work, which reflects great progress. The total number of contributors shows a phenomenal interest in a captivating scientific field for chemists, physicists, engineers, biologists and medical doctors (radiation oncologists).

Presently BNCT is usually reserved for brain tumours, which have a poor prognosis. The treatment involves the sensitising of the tumourous tissue with boron components and then submitting the patient to a slow neutron flux from nuclear reactors, or to the slow neutron component from neutron beams. There are 4 reactors used for clinical work in Japan,

BOOK MANAGER'S CHOICE

Hypertension in Pregnancy, by David Churchill and D Gareth Beevers. Published by BMJ Books, February 1999, 156 pp, R251.



This practical book provides comprehensive, up-to-date information on the detection and management of hypertension in pregnant women, and it is aimed at GPs, midwives and junior hospital doctors. The contents include: definitions and classifications, epidemiology, investigation and treatment of hypertension in pregnancy, prevention of the development of pre-eclampsia, intensive care of the pre-eclamptic and eclamptic patient, and some rare cases.

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



where about 108 patients have been treated.

In the USA only Brookhaven seems to have a facility and there is one in Europe in Holland. The two main drugs used are BSH and BPA.

Some porphyrin derivatives, used for PDT (photodynamic therapy) localise preferentially in solid tumours, and porphyrins can be boronated. BOPP is such a compound. The two drugs currently attracting the most interest are borocaptate sodium (BSH) and borophenylamine fructose (BPF). Clinical experience suggests that BSH in doses smaller than 100 mg/kg are safe, but doses more than 200 mg/kg killed rats. More clinical trials and pre-clinical work is indicated.

There are many new ideas and solutions related to BNCT. Despite these (including accelerator versus reactor solutions), predictions about their clinical testing are cautiously avoided.

In conclusion the two books summarise the knowledge in the field very well, and are a must for workers in the field. The cost is well worth it.

B J Smit

MOLECULAR NEUROBIOLOGY OF PAIN. PROGRESS IN PAIN RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT. VOLUME 9

Edited by David Borsook. Pp. xii + 369. Illustrated. US\$76. IASP Press. 1997. ISBN 0-931092-19-1.

As the ninth publication in a series entitled *Progress in Pain Research and Management*, this book focuses on new molecular mechanisms in the research and management of chronic pain. The conversion of laboratory research to clinical therapy is always difficult, and this is one of the weaknesses of the book. It deals with changes occurring in the nociceptive development, and inflammation in some diseases. Experimental approaches to understanding nociception by the inhibition of genes (in the development of the nociceptive system) are discussed. The roles of nerve growth factor, brain-derived neurotrophic factor and neurotrophin-3 in nociceptor development and maintenance, and in post-metabolic or post-traumatic damage, are summarised. The neurobiology of inflammation is highlighted, with the emphasis on the roles of opioids, cytokines, and the biological effects of nerve growth factor (in lowering thresholds).

A revolution in molecular biology has allowed, for the first time, the study of pain at the level of the gene, using transgenic mice that overexpress, or do not express, pain-related proteins. New advances in molecular biological technology include the cloning of receptors (e.g. voltage-sensitive sodium channels, opioid receptors), the alteration of gene expression by antisense

mRNA injection, or the creation of transgenic animals. For anaesthesiologists, the molecular mechanisms for the analgesic properties of the α_2 -adrenergic agonists are probed. Future possibilities in the case of pain control include conferring a new level of physiological modulation through expression of a gene. One's appetite has been whetted in this book for the exciting new possibilities in the future management and understanding of pain mechanisms. However, this book applies more to researchers in pain than it does to the practising clinician.

E A Shipton

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.

ABC of Colorectal Diseases.* Second edition. Edited by DJ Jones. Pp. xi + 109. Illustrated. £18.95. BMJ. 1999. ISBN 0-7279-1105-8.

Clinical Futures.* Edited by Marshall Marinker and Michael Peckham. Pp. xii + 219. £19.95. BMJ. 1998. ISBN 0-7279-1231-3.

Pocket Guide to Teaching for Medical Instructors.* Edited by Kevin Mackway-Jones and Mike Walker. Pp. xi + 91. BMJ. 1998. ISBN 0-7279-1380-8.

Management of Heart and Lung Transplant Patients.* Edited by Peter M Schofield and Paul A Corris. Pp. xi + 230. £45. BMJ. 1998. ISBN 0-7279-1365-4.

Pulse Oximetry.* Revised. Principles and Practice Series. By John TB Moyle. Series Editors CEW Hahn and AP Adams. Pp. ix + 140. £18.95. BMJ. 1998. ISBN 0-7279-1235-6.

ABC of Sexually Transmitted Diseases.* Fourth Edition. By Michael W Adler. Pp. vi + 75. Illustrated. £16.95. BMJ. 1998. ISBN 0-7279-1368-9.

Narrative Based Medicine. Dialogue and Discourse in Clinical Practice.* Edited by Trisha Greenhalgh and Brian Hurwitz. Pp. xvi + 286. £19.95. BMJ. 1998. ISBN 0-7279-1223-2.

Basic Sciences in Ophthalmology: A Self Assessment Text.* Second edition. By John Ferris. Pp. xiii + 480. Illustrated. £35. BMJ. 1999. ISBN 0-7279-1377-8.

Cancer Pain Relief and Palliative Care in Children.* Pp. ix + 76. SwFr18/US\$16.20. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-1545127.

Practical Anatomy. The Human Body Dissected.* By Jules Kieser and John Allan. Pp. xiv + 400. Illustrated. R190. Witwatersrand University Press. 1999. ISBN 1-86814-309-0.

State-of-the-Art Technology in Anesthesia and Intensive Care.* Excerpta Medica International Congress Series 1168. Edited by Kazuyuki Ikeda, Matsuyuki Doi and Tomiei Kazama. Pp. xii + 337. NLG295/US\$169.50. Elsevier. 1998. ISBN 0-444-50008-1.

Skin. Interface of a Living System. Perspective for Skin Care System in the Future.* Excerpta Medica International Congress Series 1159. Edited by Hachiro Taggami, John A Parrish and Tatsuya Ozawa. Pp. xii + 198. Elsevier. 1998. ISBN 0-444-82964-4