



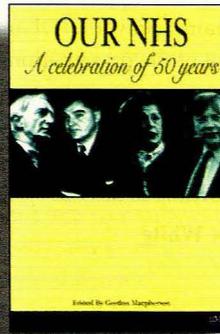
BOOKS

OUR NHS. A CELEBRATION OF 50 YEARS*

Edited by Gordon Macpherson. Pp. xxv + 227. £28. BMJ. 1998.
ISBN 0-7279-1279-8.

The title says it all. 'Our NHS', because no matter what political fashions come and go, or how pessimistic press reports may soun the British people are fiercely proud and protective of their National Health Service, and woe betide any political party that tinkers with it. The last to do so was the Conservative government in 1989 when Margaret Thatcher brought in a controversial restructuring of the NHS which introduced an 'internal market' for the NHS based on self-governing hospitals and budget-holding GPs. It is interesting to contrast the fiercely critical reaction of the medical profession to that measure, and its easier reaction to the introduction of the NHS in 1948, which it roundly condemned as heralding 'the end of medicine as we know it'. It did – thank heavens. No matter what the managed care pundits may say, and whatever current mores may dictate, there should be no place for the market mentality in medicine, unless we all want to be shopkeepers rather than doctors, and the present British government is currently doing its best to undo the damage caused by the iron lady's ill-advised foray into health care economics. To accountants who, you may have noticed, now run the world, health facilities are untidy things because they represent cost centres on a budget sheet which cannot be balanced by easily assessed tangible benefits within the accounting period under review. Hence the constant reluctance to allocate money to them, and the ongoing battle between those who use resources and those who hold the purse strings. Never let anyone tell you 'there is no money available'. Money can always be found for practically anything, but the essential prerequisite for raising it is a strong political will. That is something that Aneurin Bevan, who introduced the NHS in 1948, had in no small measure.

The book itself comprises a selection of 30 excellent essays from a cross-section of those who have worked in or for the NHS. They range from medico-political heavyweights like Lord Walton of Dechant, Sir George Godber and Sir Douglas Black, to – well, I won't mention their names because you probably won't know them. Between them however, they build up a kaleidoscopic impression of what started as a unique socio-political experiment, but which has since metamorphosed



into a revered national institution. It was Benjamin Disraeli who identified health as the basis for national prosperity. Nothing has changed to contradict that observation, but the British NHS in the 50 years of its existence has gone a long way towards putting Disraeli's principle into effective practice.

N C Lee

ARRHYTHMOGENIC RIGHT VENTRICULAR CARDIOMYOPATHY/DYSPLASIA*

Edited by A Nava, L Rossi and G Thiene. Pp. xix + 493. NLG 397/US\$228. Elsevier Science. 1997. ISBN 0-444-82447-2.

Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Cardiomyopathy/Dysplasia (ARVC/D) is a comprehensive book summarising our current knowledge about ARVC/D 9 years after the first broad review of the topics (*Eur Heart J*, 10 (Suppl. D). 1989). It is an important publication since it brings currently known data to the larger cardiology and medicine community, which has not been uniformly aware and updated about the disease that has been diagnosed among all racial groups in South Africa.

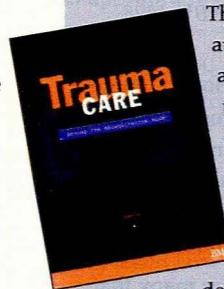
The diagnosis remains a challenge and the usefulness of diagnostic criteria suggested by the Task Force of the Working Group for Myocardial and Pericardial Disease of the European Society of Cardiology and of the Scientific Council on Cardiomyopathies of the International Society and Federation of Cardiology needs to be established. Magnetic resonance

BOOK MANAGER'S CHOICE

Trauma Care, Beyond the Resuscitation Room, edited by P Driscoll and D Skinner, published by BMJ Books, R1 540.

This highly-illustrated, comprehensive and authoritative hard cover text concentrates on care after the golden hour. The initial resuscitation of the trauma victim by the trauma team is described and the management of patients in the early post-resuscitation phase is then dealt with in detail. Advice is given on communication and transfer of patients to trauma centres, and separate chapters discuss variations when dealing with special population groups and conditions. Of special interest to workers in South African trauma centres will be the chapters on blast and gunshot injuries, and trauma associated with motor vehicle accidents.

* 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





imaging is becoming the most useful diagnostic tool for ARVC/D with its ability to describe anatomical abnormalities (thinning of right ventricular wall or localised dyskinesia), as well as to identify the replacement of myocardium by fibro-adipose tissue. It is important to realise that a magnetic resonance imaging cannot be the only diagnostic tool and that it might become a source of a false diagnosis, especially in the hands of an inexperienced reporter.

Although the book is comprehensive and includes nearly everybody who has made a significant contribution to the topic, it clearly shows how limited our knowledge is. Since 1989 there has been progress in identifying genetic aspects of the disease but data about the natural course are still rather incomplete. New modalities like implantation of cardioverter/defibrillators and radiofrequency catheter ablation were applied with success, however, optimal management algorithms for pharmacological treatment, device implantation, catheter ablation or arrhythmia surgery need to be studied further.

The book should be available in all teaching institutions and in all centres dealing with arrhythmias and clinical electrophysiology. Arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy/dysplasia should be firmly entrenched in diagnostic algorithms of broad complex tachycardias, especially among the younger population.

Miroslav J Munclinger

ADVANCES IN THE PREVENTION OF OCCUPATIONAL RESPIRATORY DISEASES*

Edited by Keizo Chiyotani, Yutaka Hosoda and Yoshiharu Aizawa. Pp. xxviii + 1236. NLG515/US\$296. Elsevier Science BV. 1998. ISBN 0-444-82791-9.

This book is one of the Excerpta Medica International Congress Series and covers the Ninth International Conference on Occupational Respiratory Disease, held in 1997 in Kyoto, Japan. This book contains the six keynote addresses, five reports from working groups and reprints the abstracts and summaries from the 259 presentations at the conference.

Among this multitude of presentations there are many that are 'state of the art' and fascinating. They reflect that this was indeed a successful conference and publication of this volume provides an important service in ensuring that this information is available in print. Much of this information will probably not be reprinted elsewhere.

This is clearly a reference work and most suitable for medical libraries and occupational health reference centres. It is a volume that will no doubt frequently be cited in the occupational health literature.

The cost of the volume, its size and density of contents make compact disc (CD) a very competitive alternative format for the information in this volume. A CD would be easier to search through, occupy less space and probably cost less.

Searching through the volume using the keyword topics such as mesothelioma or bakers' asthma revealed interesting contributions but this way of searching is clumsy. The index lacks the use of multiple keywords and there is over-reliance on what appeared in the paper's title. For example, isocyanates paint sprayers, TDI and MDI are not cross-referenced although all of the presentations dealt with related subjects.

This is not the kind of book you can just sit down and read but I was engrossed for hours skipping through topics of interest to me from a conference that I did not have the good fortune to attend.

N White

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.

Genetics of Focal Epilepsies.* Edited by SF Berkovic, P Genton, E Hirsch and F Picard. Pp. viii + 286. Illustrated. £59/US\$103. John Libbey. 1999. ISBN 0-86196-569-8.

Quality Control Methods for Medicinal Plant Materials.* Pp. viii + 115. SwFr35/US\$31.50. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-1545100.

Handbook of Cardiac Pacing.* By Charles J Love. Pp. 145. Illustrated. US\$45. LANDES Bioscience. 1998. ISBN 157059492-9.

Pain and Suffering.* By William K Livingston. Pp. xvii + 250. US\$48. IASP Press. 1998. ISBN 0-931092-24-8.

Control and Surveillance of African Trypanosomiasis.* Report of a WHO Expert Committee. Technical Report Series No. 881. Pp. vi + 113. SwFr23/US\$20.70. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-120881-3.

The Use of Essential Drugs.* Eighth Report of a WHO Expert Committee (Including the Revised Model List of Essential Drugs). Technical Report Series No. 882. Pp. vi + 77. SwFr19/US\$17.10. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-120882-1.

Selected Non-Heterocyclic Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons.* Environmental Health Criteria No. 202. Pp. xxii + 883. SwFr174/US\$156.60. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-157202-7.

Reproductive Health Research: The New Directions.* UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction Biennial Report 1996-1997. Pp. 162. SwFr35/US\$31.50. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-1561920.

Primary Prevention of Mental, Neurological and Psychosocial Disorders.* Pp. ix + 113. SwFr35/US\$31.50. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-154516X.