

Boekbesprekings/Book Reviews

Cardiac arrhythmias

Principles of Cardiac Arrhythmias. 3rd ed. By Edward K. Chung. Pp. xiii + 809. Illustrated. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins. 1983.

This textbook, now in its 3rd edition, must surely rank as one of the classics of cardiac literature. The text is concise and is accompanied by most apt, and sometimes unique, illustrations and tables. There are a total of 29 long chapters each written by the same author, which makes for easier continuous reading when compared with other textbooks compiled by numerous contributing authors. A most attractive feature is the comprehensive list of references and 'suggested readings' at the conclusion of each chapter, allowing the inexperienced reader quick access to key references. Furthermore, the pertinent summaries concluding each chapter are exceptionally pleasing.

Although each chapter is a masterpiece of design and exposition, there are some which are memorable. The one on the Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome is infused with refreshing insight and clarity making a usually difficult topic easy to grasp. The author emphasizes the possibility of misinterpreting a pseudo-inferior myocardial infarction but neglects to mention the value of amiodarone in treatment, an exclusion almost certainly due to the fact that this drug has not been fully evaluated in the USA. Another outstanding chapter is that on the sick sinus syndrome, in which the writer reminds us that this is the commonest indication for a permanent pacemaker (preferably programmable and occasionally A-V sequential) for the bradyarrhythmia, in addition to drug therapy for the accompanying tachyarrhythmia; the prognosis unfortunately still appears to be rather poor despite this management. A fascinating chapter is written on exercise-induced cardiac arrhythmias highlighting those of ventricular origin, and further excellent chapters are provided on such topics as Holter monitor electrocardiography, electrolyte imbalance and cardiac arrhythmias, digitalization and digitalis-induced cardiac arrhythmias, anti-arrhythmia drug therapy, and artificial cardiac pacing.

One has little hesitation in strongly recommending acquisition of this expensive book, although it will be best suited to physicians, cardiologists and cardiothoracic surgeons. I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity of reviewing this text and sharing in the thoughts of someone so experienced and dedicated to his field.

J. Przybojewski

Reproductive medicine and ethical issues

Ethical Issues in Reproductive Medicine. Ed. by M. Reidy. Pp. 176. Illustrated. R19,60. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan. 1982.

This is an interesting book which was compiled from a series of papers written by various authors and delivered at study evenings at the Coombe Lying-in Hospital, Dublin, and edited by Maurice Reidy who is a moral theologian. It is interesting in that the authors studiously avoid a strident and polemical note in dealing with these emotive issues, and attempt to treat their subjects in a factual and analytical manner. As the editor remarks in the section on abortion: 'Talk of mass murder, genocide, massacre of the innocents and invoking memories of the Third Reich cannot begin to convince the opposition and alienates the middle ground. The argument disappears in the emotiveness and reason loses out.'

It is also interesting that in an age which seems to base its moral and ethical standards on pragmatism and a rather woolly humanism, these discussions are at least based on solid philosophical foundations, even though it may not be a philosophy with which all could agree. Well written, eminently readable, provocative and skillfully edited, this book is thoroughly recommended.

Parasitic infection and disease

From Parasitic Infection to Parasitic Disease (Contribution to Microbiology and Immunology, vol. 7). Ed. by P. L. Gigase and E. A. C. van Marck. Pp. ix + 269. Illustrated. DM 216,-. Basle: S. Karger. 1983.

This is the latest in a series of volumes that records colloquia on topics of parasitology and tropical public health held annually at the Prince Leopold Institute of Tropical Medicine in Belgium. The title of the book is somewhat vague and is better served by the title of the symposium: 'Colloquium on the pathogenesis of disease induced through parasites as compared to other noxious agents'. Five topics were examined. Two groups of papers considered the involvement of immunological processes in the induction of parasitic disease, noting the ability of some parasites (specifically the filariae) to suppress the host's immune response, and discussed the involvement of parasitic and non-parasitic mechanisms in the induction of glomerular disease. Another group considered the pathogenesis of cerebral malaria and cerebral trypanosomiasis. The effect of the presence of trypanosomes in the extravascular spaces was also discussed, while another group considered the pathogenesis of various types of fibrotic lesions (hepatic, pulmonary and endomyocardial fibrosis) resulting from schistosomiasis, malaria, filariasis and silicosis. The book has numerous diagrams and the photomicrographs are of a high standard.

P. J. Fripp

Cancer

Prolonged Arrest of Cancer (New Horizons in Oncology, vol. 1). Ed. by B. A. Stoll. Pp. xiv + 454. Illustrated. £25,75. London: John Wiley. 1982.

The past 3 decades have seen tremendous advances in the management of patients with cancer which initially could be ascribed to technical improvements and the development of new drugs. Recently the exploration of biological facts has led to further improvement in the treatment of cancer. This book is the first in a series entitled *New Horizons in Oncology*, which is intended to extend the horizons of the very large number of clinicians engaged in cancer research, by examining the possibilities of combining existing treatment modalities through utilizing known biological characteristics both of the tumour and of the host. It deals with this subject in 3 parts: the 1st examines the clinical manifestation of slow growth, delayed regrowth or spontaneous arrest in the growth of human cancer. The 2nd studies the nature of growth-modulating or metastasis-modulating factors at the primary site, or when the cancer cell is detached from the invading tumour, is entrapped in a distant organ or established as a metastasis, and the 3rd examines the therapeutic potential of growth modulators (sometimes called biological response modifiers) and their relationship to that of other types of systemic therapy.

This volume was written under the editorship of Dr Basil Stoll, who has been engaged in the practice of oncology for 30 years, and there are 27 contributors who have written about the various aspects of prolonged arrest of malignant disease with clarity and enthusiasm. This book will provide a meeting ground between scientists engaged in basic research and clinicians by bridging divergent philosophies so as to provide clinicians with an authoritative and balanced interpretation of new scientific findings and thinking. Furthermore, it should help orientate towards possible application of these biological facts in the clinical situation.

H. C. Falkson

Paediatric angiography

Pediatric Angiography. Ed. by P. Stanley. Pp. xv + 425. Illustrated. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins. 1982.

This monograph is well presented. Throughout the book reference is made to illustrative cases which are well and interestingly documented. The place of angiography in relationship to computed tomography, ultrasound and other imaging modalities of nuclear medicine are assessed in the chapters devoted to the various organ systems. The angiograms are of excellent quality and well annotated.

The introductory chapters on the use and technique of paediatric arterial catheterization are full of excellent information for radiologists in training as well as experts in this field.

The authors place marked emphasis on cardiac abnormalities and the chapter on the angiography of congenital heart disease is particularly interesting. Emphasis is placed on the embryology of the various conditions, which is helpful in the elucidation of both plain and angiographic films. Detailed anatomy of all the major vessels catheterized is provided in this book, and normal variants are well documented. Although emphasis is placed on paediatric problems, the demonstration of anatomy is useful for all age groups.

The chapter on interventional radiology is instructive and detailed, and the authors give clear diagrams of available equipment and techniques for the retrieval of foreign objects.

This book will be of use to all those interested in angiology and in particular paediatric angiography.

J. M. Isdale

Thin-needle aspiration biopsy

Thin-needle Aspiration Biopsy (Major Problems in Pathology, vol. 14). By W. J. Frable. Pp. xviii + 358. Illustrated. £42.25. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders. 1983.

Thin-needle aspiration biopsy, as opposed to needle biopsy, is employed for the cytological diagnosis of deep-seated lesions. The technique can be very difficult to master, and cell damage taking place in the course of the procedure results in artefacts which could lead to an erroneous cytological diagnosis.

This book attempts to initiate the beginner into the employment of various techniques to avoid most of the pitfalls which might be encountered. A great deal of material is presented in the text and in pictorial form, which could be very helpful to the cytopathologist dealing with the occasional aspiration. However, the method will probably find little application outside a few specialized units where the cytopathologist has access to an abundance of material, which is absolutely essential for becoming and remaining proficient in this form of diagnosis.

The book has numerous black-and-white microphotographs, many of such poor quality that they might as well have been rejected. Only 12 colour photographs appear.

D. M. de Villiers

Pulmonary medicine — essentials

Essentials of Pulmonary Medicine. By M. H. Williams. Pp. xi + 190. Illustrated. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders. 1982.

This little book contains a great deal of information in its 190 pages and manages to be informative without becoming indigestible. Aimed at the generalist rather than the specialist, it covers the field of pulmonary medicine comprehensively and well. Diagrams and charts are clearly printed and easily interpreted, and the text dealing with clinical management is well illustrated with appropriate radiographs. It is recommended for use by students and for quick reference by clinicians.

The cardiovascular system — non-invasive assessment

Noninvasive Assessment of the Cardiovascular System: Diagnostic Principles and Techniques. Ed. by E. B. Diethrich. Pp. xxiii + 319. Illustrated. £25.75. London: Wright PSG. 1982.

This book comprises a collection of scientific papers presented at the 3rd International Cardiovascular Congress held in Scottsdale, Arizona, on 16-18 February 1981. There are 4 sections: (i) evaluation of the cerebrovascular system; (ii) cardiac evaluation; (iii) evaluation of the peripheral vascular system; and (iv) a special section on invasive technology. A broad field encompassing several disciplines is covered, making for varied appreciation of the topics.

The section on the cardiovascular system includes many fine and interesting articles and emphasizes the use and advantages of Doppler techniques in the assessment of carotid artery stenosis, particularly if asymptomatic, in the patient undergoing cardiovascular surgery. Most of the papers conclude that prophylactic carotid endarterectomy in these cases is unnecessary since there does not appear to be a greater incidence of peri-operative cerebrovascular accident. The measurement of ophthalmic artery systolic pressure (oculoplethysmography) is demonstrated to be most useful in the assessment of extracranial internal carotid obstruction in asymptomatic patients undergoing aortocoronary bypass operations, and reduces the necessity for the more usual cerebral angiography. Other non-invasive techniques for measuring blood flow, such as nuclear magnetic resonance, transcutaneous ultrasonic volume flow meters, and radionuclide methods, are well detailed. The papers on cardiac evaluation do not cover much new ground. As expected there were numerous presentations highlighting the usefulness of radio-isotopes in the diagnosis of coronary artery obstruction as well as myocardial contractility. The paucity of articles describing two-dimensional echocardiographic techniques is quite striking and somewhat surprising considering the enormous advances made in this field during the past few years. Interesting papers are presented on the use of diltiazem in coronary vasospasm, as well as myocardial infarction complicating Prinzmetal's angina. The value of percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PTCA) is again emphasized.

A comprehensive section on the evaluation of the peripheral vascular system is provided in the text. Doppler techniques are highlighted and a most interesting paper on the use of computed tomographic angiography in the assessment of peripheral vascular surgery is given. Indium-labelled scintigraphy in the diagnosis of lower limb venous thrombosis is shown to be most useful. The final section is devoted entirely to a short paper delineating the place of intracoronary thrombolysis using an intracoronary infusion of streptokinase with additional PTCA. However, the final word concerning the role of these interventions in the reduction of myocardial infarction size has yet to be uttered.

Overall, this book can be recommended to the vascular surgeon, neurosurgeon and cardiologist. The value of the publication is increased by the inclusion of several lists of fairly up-to-date references, and the cost is reasonable.

J. Przybojewski

Family planning

Periodic Abstinence for Family Planning. Ed. by R. L. Kleinman. Pp. 60. Illustrated. £1.75 (in UK only). London: IPPF Medical Publications. 1983.

This is a first-class booklet which sets out all the theoretical and practical aspects of its subject with admirable clarity. There are many patients who for various reasons would rather not use chemical or mechanical methods of family planning, and would rather rely on periodic abstinence based on the calendar, basal body temperature, cervical mucus or symptothermal indications.

This book is for doctors and health workers who need to advise on these methods, although the first piece of advice which needs to be given is that the failure rate is 20 - 25%. This book is thoroughly recommended and a bargain at the price.