

Evidence-based Gastroenterology and Hepatology

Edited by John McDonald, Andrew Burroughs, Brian Feagan

Blackwell Science 2000

Price £65.00. Pp 557

ISBN 0 7279 1182 1

Most discussions on medical management can be ended with a sentence beginning 'The evidence shows...'. *Evidence-based Gastroenterology and Hepatology* demonstrates that what many of us take for evidence is an unsystematic ragbag of miscellaneous recollections. 'Evidence' is something else.

The difference is demonstrated by a worked example in the introductory chapter: should patients who have had Crohn's disease resections receive oral mesalazine? After 5 pages of intriguing and rigorous data dissection, aggregation and analysis, we have the evidence-based answer: the patients should decide for themselves.

Further interrogation of the evidence on such ward-round-stopping topics as the need for mesalazine in inflammatory bowel disease patients on azathioprine and what to tell an icteric hepatitis B patient about the chances of developing chronic disease, revealed similar fence-sitting or gaps in the evidence base.

However, thirty chapters by over 50 international authors, with a notable Canadian contingent, demonstrate what is really known in tubular and solid organ gastroenterology. Extensive use of subheadings and bold type makes the text easy to read and the recommendations can be spotted by the large capital R in the margin along with the grade of evidence. Unfortunately, it was not always clear to which sentence the R applied. I recommend italics in the next edition.

Dies your department need this book? Well, yes it does. This information cannot be found easily elsewhere or in so compact a form. Time will tell whether it earns the accolade of being known by its editors' names, but from now on there will be less pontificating and more 'We'd better check 'Evidence-based'.'

James D Rose, The Ayr Hospital, Ayr

Anorexia Nervosa and Related Eating Disorders in Childhood and Adolescence (2nd edn)

Edited by Bryan Lask and Rachel Bryant-Waugh

Psychology Press 1999

Price £30.00. Pp 382

ISBN 0 86377 803 8

This very welcome second edition updates its predecessor by 7 years. It is written by a number of very respected clinicians and academics within the field, covering almost the entire spectrum of specialities. One of the most striking features is the comprehensiveness of its content, but the inclusiveness, conciseness and sensitivity run

close seconds. An illustration of this is how the disorders are described from the subjective viewpoints of both patient and parent, as well as the treating professionals involved.

The book is highly structured, being presented in three parts — the sufferers' views, the nature of the disorder and then clinical management, which ends in a thoughtful and helpful address of the ethical and legal issues within treatment. The first part provides an intelligent and moving description of some of the subjective torment of this serious illness and puts what follows in a very appropriate context. The second part provides a very comprehensive and detailed analysis of the epidemiology, aetiology and prognosis of the disorder with clear reference to past and current research. The final section addresses assessment and multidimensional aspects of treatment, such as medical, family, cognitive, individual, group and physical therapies. The latter sections are preceded by overviews and have regular illustrations, summary paragraphs and comprehensive references.

This book is very hard to criticize and it is of great credit to the editors and authors that they have produced a publication that is arguably an essential purchase for all those working in this area.

Peter Webster, Institute of Psychiatry, London

Surgery of the Anus, Rectum and Colon (2nd edn)

Michael RB Keighley, Norman S Williams

WB Saunders 2000

Price £285.00. Pp 2700+

ISBN 0 7020 2335 3

This is the second edition of the two-volume masterpiece on colorectal surgery. Based on the success of the first edition the authors have been persuaded to update and we now see the emergent successor to the original Golligher book which older readers will remember carried the same title — indeed the authors indicate in the preface the generous acceptance by John Golligher before his recent death that this is the modern continuation of his classic work. I am sure that this is an accolade that both authors will be proud to accept.

Why is this book so good? In these days of lap-tops and instant contact with the net readers have immediate links with the most up-to-date information on any surgical topic. To some this threatens the very existence of textbooks — but not when you see this one. Simply open this book and its class hits you even before you study its content. The print is large and clear, and the text is accompanied by Gillian Lee's strong and informative line drawings — she surely must now be one of the foremost medical artists.

The book is laid out in the usual conventional form — covering all the common topics one would expect. Where the book excels and mir-

rors the original Golligher text is how it combines good common surgical sense with supportive clinical data. This is where a good textbook offers advantages over the instant access of the internet — opinions are what are often required by experienced surgeons and if you cannot discuss cases with other colleagues this is the sort of book which can be used as a substitute. For those who require more detailed study there is an abundance of references at the end of each chapter.

So congratulations to the authors on underpinning the success of the first edition. I note that in both editions dedications have been made to your 'long suffering wives' — is it not about time you used some of the royalties to ease their pain?

Paul Thomas, Whipps Cross Hospital, London

Affective and Non-Psychotic Disorders: Recent Topics from Advances in Psychiatric Treatment Volume 2

Edited by Alan Lee

Gaskell 1999

Price £15.00. Pp 159

ISBN 1 90124217 X

This volume comprises selected articles from *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, the house journal of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' CPD programme. It is therefore written for trainers but contains much of interest to other grades and disciplines, and to examination candidates. These are succinct, well written and authoritative reviews.

Eleven of the twenty chapters concern treatment of affective disorders in various settings, and a further seven such topics as obsessive-compulsive neurosis, anorexia and bulimia, somatisation and post-traumatic stress disorder. There is a good balance between conceptual issues and management, and between pharmacological and psychological approaches. The content is up to date and evidence based.

The contributions on physical methods of treatment include detailed and practical accounts of electroconvulsive therapy and lithium therapy. It is disappointing, therefore, that no space was found for evaluation of anticonvulsants in bipolar disorder. Studies of pindolol are discussed, but there is only passing reference to mirtazepine and reboxetine. Guy Edwards brings welcome balance to the assessment of newer vs older antidepressants. PG Cowan recommends a strategy in resistant depression.

Authors with special interests urge general psychiatrists to set up a deliberate self-harm service, conduct sessions in general practice, undertake both cognitive and brief dynamic psychotherapy, and to develop skills in management of eating disorders and somatisation; all, of course, without compromising the prioritisation of the seriously mentally ill. Where, then, do we find time for reading excellent books like this?

Anthony Purches, Warley Hospital, Brentwood