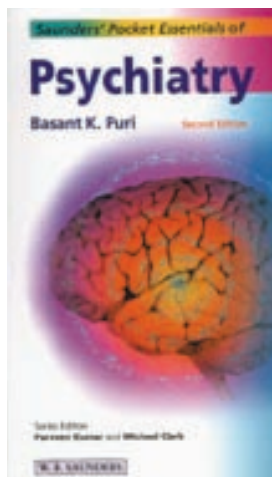


## Saunders' Pocket Essentials of Psychiatry (2nd edn)

Basant K Puri  
WB Saunders 2000  
Price £14.95. Pp 323  
ISBN 0 7020 2575 5

This pocket size book is aimed at medical students. Certainly the chapters on case presentation with mental state examination, and psychiatric disorders are very relevant and would benefit students who need a quick revision in the weeks before the final MB examination.

The chapters on cognitive disorders and phenomenology are concise and easy to read. That on dynamic psychotherapy is punctuated merely with definitions of ego psychopathology which, when read out of context, are meaningless. The sector on organic pathology is too simplistic, leading to a loss of perspective and balance when the dementias are elsewhere described in great detail. Students will find the discussion of neurotic disorders, and psychoses such as schizophrenia useful.



The authors furbish us with ICD 10 and DSM IV classifications when describing various psychiatric disorders. How meaningful and necessary these are at medical student level is debatable. There is much useful information on eating disorders and psychosexual/gender identity disorders. The chapter on forensic psychiatry is just over two pages long and not really helpful. Personality disorders are also covered very briefly. A considerable section is devoted to child and adolescent psychiatry and patients with learning disabilities.

There are many such books on the market and while some students find them helpful, by and large they tend to be overwhelming and perhaps a hindrance. Obviously the book would be read in conjunction with a more comprehensive textbook

of psychiatry, so as the essence of arriving at a psychiatric diagnosis rests on a detailed history, the really useful chapters in this book are at the beginning. There are no other particular features of this book which would lead me to recommend it.

*Francis J Dunne, Warley Hospital, Essex*

## Principles of Molecular Oncology

Edited by Miguel H Bronchud,  
MaryAnn Foote, William P Peters,  
Murray O Robinson  
Humana Press 2000  
Price \$125.00. Pp 452  
ISBN 0 89603 581 6

The field of molecular medicine is advancing so rapidly that it is a brave person who attempts to stop for a second and recapitulate molecular oncology in book form. And yet, there is a pressing need for this information not only for clinical oncologists and cancer scientists but also as reference for the vast multiprofessional team of both mature and trainee 'cancerologists' — surgeons, pathologists and nurses and pharmacists involved in drug development, to name a few — trying to keep abreast of developments.

Bronchud, Foote, Peters and Robinson have bitten the bullet and provided these professionals with an excellent and comprehensive current account of the vast spectrum of the molecular biology of cancer. The book is well written, in logical order (Markers, Pathways, The Future) and the chapter summaries are helpful (but not always included). Almost always complex (and often uncertain) issues are discussed openly in the 17 chapters with superb referencing. Genetic markers in sporadic tumours are dealt with

in detail. Utilizing the expert knowledge of the chapter authors from Europe and the USA, the theory, where appropriate, is incorporated into recognizable contemporary practice. By the very nature of the material, the authors will become victims of their own success, requiring to update the text regularly. The 'antitumour immunity' chapter will, I'm sure, call for expansion in the second edition.

I would highly recommend the book to both scientists and health-care workers involved in the field of cancer. However, it is pricey and therefore essential for departmental cancer research units to purchase this invaluable reference.

*Annie Young, University of Birmingham*

## The Medical Millennium

HSJ Lee  
Parthenon Publishing 2000  
Pp 113. Price £25.00  
ISBN 1 85070 466 X

The idea behind this slim (but grossly overpriced) volume is a good one; the author (whose provenance is not stated) tells her readership that its main objective is 'to identify and describe some of the men and women (from Peter of Abano (1250–1316) to Yvunge Zotterman (1898–1982)) who have made an especially notable contribu-

tion to medical advances throughout the last 1000 years'.

The major difficulty is just how to identify those 1000 pioneers. As she points out in her foreword some, e.g. Louis Pasteur, James (sic) Harvey, and Jonas Salk are self-selecting, but what about the others?

I found the selection to be, not surprisingly, American orientated, and relatively 'modern' individuals have dominated the scenario. But where, for example, are Gilbert Blane, Russell Brock, Erasmus Darwin, Hans Sloane, Thomas Trotter or William Woodville.

I assume that Charles Darwin and Mary Wortley Montagu are not included because they are not medically qualified, but nor was Gregor Mendel — who is. If one spent longer than 15 minutes, I am sure that many other worthies could be identified. From an opposing viewpoint, many of the inclusions are not (to my mind) strictly justifiable on merit.

Entries vary in length from 2 to 7 lines, so that they are of necessity brief and didactic; did the elephant man (see Frederick Treves) really suffer from neurofibromatosis? This theory is currently disputed. Nor are the titles always accurate; for example, Berkeley Moynihan (like Joseph Lister) was ennobled.

The book contains a number of black-and-white photographs — most

of them portraits of individuals included in the book. There is no index, but this is not in any case necessary. The book is attractively produced, but I shall continue to rely on the well established histories of medicine (most of which contain far more detail) for biographical details of medical pioneers.

*GC Cook, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London*

#### **DRUGS: Dilemmas and Choices**

Working Party of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Royal College of Physicians

Gaskell 2000

Price £9.50. Pp 304

ISBN 1 90124442 44 7

The title of this book conceals its true contents. It is the report of a Working Party, set up by the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Psychiatrists with the support of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, about addiction and drug abuse.

It is a most interesting and readable book which would be of interest to the non-specialist and the intelligent lay public. It relates to the British situation in an international setting.

It starts by reviewing the main drugs of abuse including alcohol and tobacco and goes on to discuss the historical reasons why alcohol and tobacco are legal while heroin and amphetamines are not. The complex causes of drug abuse and its consequences for the individual and society are discussed in the context of the international drugs trade. This leads to consideration of the present lack of success of present drug control policies and the benefits and limitations of treatment. The book ends with a final chapter on the key issues which are designed not to provide answers but to stimulate informed debate.

A well-presented book, informative and easy-to-read.

My only adverse comments about this publication would be the sum-

maries in small print on a grey background and the poor quality of the black and white photographs. A good read for under a tenner!

*John Ferguson, Prescription Pricing Authority, Newcastle-upon-Tyne*

#### **Heart Failure in Clinical Practice**

Edited by John McMurray and John Cleland

Martin Dunitz 1999

Price £65.00. Pp 352

ISBN 1 85317 561 7

This is the second edition of this book, published about 6 years after the first one. As the editors point out a lot has changed in the field of heart failure during this period. The editors have gathered an eminent list of contributors and overall the book is well written. The book is divided into three sections: epidemiology and causes, pathophysiology, and treatment. I particularly enjoyed the first two sections. An excellent chapter on epidemiology is followed by a thought-provoking one on the importance of hypertension in the aetiology of heart failure in the modern era.

Reviewers invariably bring their inherent biases to their reviews; I found the chapter on diastolic dysfunction controversial. The authors are to be congratulated, however, for their work in attempting to classify this rather vague and ill-defined entity.

Doctors at all levels with an interest in heart failure will find enough detail in the section on pathophysiology to interest them. I felt that the contributions in the section on treatment were of variable quality. In particular the section on surgical treatment for heart failure was unbalanced. Some of the data quoted was out of date and no attempt was made to guide the reader into those modes of therapy that have been proven to work and those which are promising but have not undergone evaluation.

This book will be of value to trainees in cardiology and to cardiologists and

physicians who want an update on any aspect of heart failure. At £65 I suspect it will be bought mainly by libraries and departments of cardiology.

*Jayan Parameshwar, Papworth Hospital, Cambridge*

#### **Liver Disease and Laboratory Medicine**

Ian McFarlane, Adrian Bomford, Roy Sherwood

ACB Venture Publications 2000

Price £24.00. Pp 176

ISBN 0 902429 10 8

Although it may be galling to have to write this publicly, I suspect every clinical hepatologist will freely admit the heavy reliance the clinician places on the histopathologists, radiologists and laboratories to diagnose and manage patients with liver disease. This volume is designed to provide the clinician and medical students with a short succinct account of how laboratory medicine can help in the management of patients with liver disease.

There is no doubt that this book succeeds in its aims. Certainly the authors have managed to combine a coherent narrative with the ability to present information clearly. Virtually all aspects of clinical liver disease are covered and the index is comprehensive.

Inevitably there are a few minor gripes: certainly it would be helpful if the publishers had taken a little bit more trouble with the figures which are sometimes difficult to read, although the diagrams are clear. There is the odd spelling error. The authors, rightly in my view, do not give a reference list but give further reading. Some of these readings are somewhat out-of-date.

However, these are minor complaints and overall, the book is excellent and can be recommended to all those involved in the management of patients with liver disease.

*James Neuberger, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham*