

ABC of Rheumatology (2nd edn)

Edited by Michael L Snaith
 BMJ Publishing Group 1999
 Price £17.95. Pp 90
 ISBN 0 7279 1385 9

An excellent comprehensive introduction to rheumatology. It will suit those who want to have easy access to short notes on most aspects of rheumatology, medical students, MRCP candidates and those in primary care.

This edition has changed little from the first edition and my only comments are that the writing is a little old-fashioned and there could have been more use of colour to outline the tables showing essential pointers which are otherwise very useful.

I would recommend it to all junior doctors, medical students and those who want a book they can readily access with the information which is needed on a day to day basis.

CS Higgins, Northwick Park & St Mark's NHS Trust, Middlesex

Cardiovascular Therapeutics: Cross-sectional analysis of major clinical trials

Robert Haiat, Gérard Leroy
 Manson Publishing 1999
 Price £29.95. Pp 346
 ISBN 1 874545 002 8

The title of this book put me off. How could it be sensible to produce a book of major clinical trials when things change so rapidly? Surely in this area electronic databases or regular publications addressing individual therapeutic questions would have an advantage? However, I was mistaken. The authors have done a very good job, giving a beautifully presented practical summary of what is and is not known in cardiovascular therapeutics.

The chapters are laid out clearly under headings such as 'current state of knowledge', 'unresolved questions' and 'practical aspects of treatment'. It is a concise, accurate and evidence-based description of how to treat the major cardiovascular diseases. Its subheadings are usefully declarative 'beta blockers reduce post M morbid-

ity and mortality' or, in the heart failure section, 'long term treatment with potassium-lowering diuretics is associated with increased risk of death from arrhythmia'. A test of any such book would be how it deals with the thorny issue of antiarrhythmic drugs and effects on morbidity and mortality — this book passes with flying colours.

I am sure that this will become obligatory reading for MRCP and will be a useful and practical guide to have on hand for any ward round (it fits in the pocket of a white coat). Its advantage over some of the more epidemiological texts or databases is that it is written by practising cardiologists and is immensely practical — it doesn't leave the reader wondering what he or she should do. My only comment would be that to continue to be useful it will need to be updated every 6 months or so.
Patrick Vallance, UCL Medical School, London

Malignant Liver Tumors: Current and Emerging Therapies

Edited by Pierre-Alain Clavien
 Blackwell Science 1999
 Price £112.00. Pp 363
 ISBN 0 632 04406 3

This book covers established and new techniques in the management of malignant liver tumours. Each chapter autonomously covers a well defined topic and can be read independently. In all the chapters the background, methods and equipment used for the treatments are explained clearly. Moreover the illustrations will greatly facilitate understanding for the multidisciplinary range of specialists to whom this book will appeal. The evidence and results of different modalities for specific liver diseases are reviewed and all chapters are well referenced with guides to further reading.

Part IV has eight chapters looking at futuristic developments in gene therapy, immunotherapy and antiangiogenic therapies and the results of current phase I trials in these areas. Unfortunately this section is likely to be outdated within a short time. Our sole criticism is that the opening paragraph of the first chapter of this extensive review about

malignant liver disease should focus on liver biopsy. We feel this should be a last resort in diagnosis because of the risk of converting a potentially curative situation into a palliative one. The book highlights the wide variety of approaches to liver malignancy and should be essential reading for all involved in this multidisciplinary field.

TD Cecil, M Rees, North Hampshire Hospital, Basingstoke

Handbook of Diabetes (2nd edn)

Gareth Williams, John C Pickup
 Blackwell Science 1999
 Price £29.95. Pp 220
 ISBN 0 632 05504 9

As an accompaniment to the textbook, and the CD-ROM and the slide pack of the textbook, enter the second edition of the *Handbook of Diabetes*. The handbook is divided into 32 chapters of varying length, containing a large number of short sections covering a comprehensive spectrum of subjects related to diabetes. Over 120 highly respected authors have contributed to the book. The subjects range from the history of diabetes, normal physiology, diagnosis, treatment, complications to the organization of diabetes care. There are some frustrating errors for example — who is RB Lawrence? The chapters are generously punctuated by an array of clear, concise and generally helpful figures, flow diagrams and tables.

The accompanying text varies from simple fact to in-depth coverage of a particular subject and this variation may leave the reader frustrated. This is also reflected in the overall content of the chapters which vary from being superficial to relatively comprehensive.

The handbook provides a quick user-friendly reference text for diabetes and its management; Pickup and Williams have achieved this not uncharacteristically well. It will be particularly useful for professions allied to medicine and undergraduates with an interest in diabetes, and patients will find it an invaluable reference.

SJ Hurel, Middlesex Hospital, London

Textbook of Adult Emergency Medicine

Edited by Peter Cameron, George Jelink, Anne-Maree Kelly, Lindsay Murray
 Churchill Livingstone 1999
 Price £39.95. Pp 757
 ISBN 0 443 06280 3

The editors set themselves high standards by setting out to write a definitive textbook of adult emergency medicine. This first edition does not reach those heights, probably reflecting the large number of authors and inconsistencies in style and content. The most notable omissions are the lack of diagrams and descriptions to accompany practical procedures, particularly in the initial resuscitation section.

Some chapters are well written and concise, giving adequate information backed by useful references. The section on trauma management is particularly clear, especially the sections on spinal trauma and trauma in pregnancy. Including a chapter on the ethics of resuscitation is helpful, with a useful discussion of benefits and harm. The section on the management of pul-



monary oedema is up to date, outlining the benefits of initiating therapy with systemic nitrates and gives an overview of the potential benefits of continuous positive airway pressure and non-invasive ventilation (but mentions only BiPAP).

Other sections are less useful: the section on pulmonary embolism, which has a complicated algorithm, gives no definitive advice for anticoagulation or thrombolysis and is separate from the section on deep vein thrombosis. The advice on treatment duration of warfarin is too short. Neither magnesium or labetalol, both currently accepted treatments, are mentioned in the section on pre-eclampsia. Other anomalies include separation of peptic ulcer disease and *Helicobacter* infection from upper gastrointestinal bleeding, inclusion of toxic shock under soft tissue injury and a section on antibiotics which is essentially a poor formulary separated from the clinical situation.

Highlighting the chapters with essentials and controversies is a good one and I feel sure this book will improve with further editions.

Derek Bell, Edinburgh Royal Infirmary