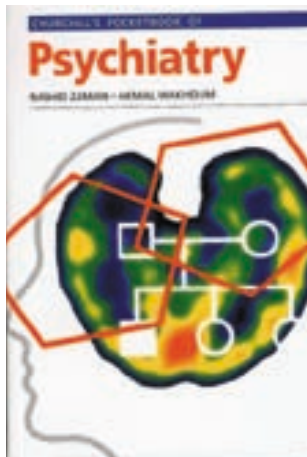


Churchill's Pocketbook of Psychiatry

Rashid Zaman, Akmal Makhdum
Churchill Livingstone 2000
Price £16.95. Pp 343
ISBN 0 443 05979 9

This volume opens with an account of what is expected of the trainee new to psychiatry, and a description of the roles of the other members of the multidisciplinary team. There are chapters on clinical assessment, management of emergencies and the legal framework. The section on psychotherapeutic approaches is clear and informative, although brief (10 pages) in comparison to that on physical treatments (100 pages).

While most sections are well written, there is avoidable repetition within and between chapters. Important topics such as dementia and postnatal illness are largely omitted from consideration, along with approaches to the assessment of learning disability patients and the elderly (other than



prescribing issues in the latter case).

It is noted that zuclopenthixol acetate should be used with extreme caution in antipsychotic-naïve patients, but no mention of this is made in the section on management of violence. A range of up to 240 mg of chlordiazepoxide is recommended for severe alcohol withdrawal, but an even higher one (400 mg) for 'minor abstinence symptoms'. No upper limit is given for repeated use of haloperidol and lorazepam in rapid tranquillization.

Delusions of reference are not accurately defined, as here, by a patient's belief that others are talking about or conspiring against him. Patients are not 'detained under Section 62'.

These are minor points perhaps, and much useful guidance and information is included, but in view of the competition a rethink on presentation and some of the content is desirable if future editions are to be recommended to juniors.

Anthony Purches, Warley Hospital, Essex

Medicina Antiqua

Edited by PM Jones
Harvey Miller 1999
Price £48.00. Pp 385
ISBN 1 872501 20 6

This volume represents a beautifully produced facsimile of a compendium of a group of major middle-age medical texts. It consists of an illuminated manuscript (322 pages in length) which originated in the sixth century AD; a mere 50 copies are apparently extant today. This particular copy (the codex vindobonensis 93 of the Austrian National Library) was written (and illustrated) in southern Italy in the early part of the 13th century (incidentally, there is no indication as to how the original manuscript made its way from Italy to Austria!).

An introductory essay (which also contains a commentary of the work, by Franz Unterkircher — with descriptions of the 160 folios) is by the editor who is a fellow and librarian of King's College, Cambridge; this places the text in its rightful place in the annals of medical history.

Writings on herbs and *material medica* by authors reliant on the works of Pliny and Dioscorides — who is dominant in the work — are included. There are both heathen texts and Christian ones.

The book contains author portraits, mythological scenes, cityscapes,

descriptions of medical consultations, scenes depicting surgical operations, drawings of plants and animals, architectural tables, etc — a truly 'mixed bag'. Both the world of science and that of magic and myth are represented. It is completed with a short bibliography but there is no index.

This book represents a scholarly contribution to the historical literature; the Latin text will only be meaningful to a small, select group of readers of *Hospital Medicine*. But it is superbly produced and will forever adorn my shelves.

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

Management of Acute Coronary Syndromes

Edited by Peter M Schofield
Martin Dunitz 2000
Price £25.00. Pp 244
ISBN 1 85317 719 9

Coronary artery disease is the single greatest cause of mortality in the developed world. As such all clinicians need a detailed understanding of its care. Much high quality research has been carried out in this area and a book providing a practical way of incorporating this into clinical practice is extremely valuable. This is just such a book.

Twelve chapters cover the diagnosis and treatment of both unstable angina

and acute myocardial infarction. In each case the pathophysiology and clinical features are reviewed before treatment strategies are considered. Detailed analysis is made of the roles of pharmacological, interventional cardiological and surgical techniques. The final chapter explores the ongoing care of patients following discharge.

Each chapter comprises a review by specialists of different aspects of the subject. The hallmark of the book is its excellent cross-referencing to the major trials relevant to each subject. As such it acts as a good index to trials in cardiology. Tables supporting the text provide a clear analysis of relevant material.

A potential drawback is that the use of multiple authors tends to lead to excessive repetition, although fortunately this has been limited by precise editing. In addition, as is typical of texts reviewing the rapidly evolving subject of acute coronary syndromes, there is a tendency for some of the detail to be out of date by the time that it reaches publication.

Overall this is a very well written book firmly based on the analysis of good quality published trials. It should form part of the reading list of all staff treating patients with acute coronary syndromes.

Brian Clapp, Middlesex Hospital, London

Anaesthesia and Intensive Care in Hong Kong: Evolution and Present Position

Z Lett and Ronald LO Joy-Wah
University of Hong Kong 1997
Price HK \$80. Pp 165

This monograph is a fascinating document which follows the development of anaesthesia in Hong Kong over the last half century.

Dr Zoltan Lett was the first specialist anaesthetist to be appointed in 1954, and is regarded as the doyen and father of anaesthesia in the one time colony. Dr Lo is the first Hong Kong graduate to be qualified in intensive care medicine.

The first 70 pages are a historical review of the formation of the Society of Anaesthetists of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Society of Critical Care medicine, and the Hong Kong College of Anaesthetists. International visitors have always been welcomed and feted (even if they had to sing for their supper), and the help accorded by the Faculties of Anaesthetists of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons of England, Ireland and Australasia (all now separate colleges in their own right) is detailed.

Developing an anaesthetic speciality was not easy; there was little help from surgeons, and the University of Hong Kong showed a marked reluctance to establish academic chairs and departments in a number of specialities. The Chinese University of Hong Kong was the first to have an independent Department of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care. The government could also be less than helpful at times.

The remainder of the book gives examples of meeting programmes, lists of members of various committees, and photographs of various distinguished visitors some of which are unique and which include several Deans of the English, Irish and Australian faculties.

Altogether an engaging light read, of interest to anyone who has visited

Hong Kong in a medical capacity, or who is involved in developing the speciality of anaesthesia and intensive care in Asia.

JP Alexander, Belfast City Hospital Trust

Glaucoma

Roger Hitchings
BMJ Publishing Group 2000
Price £60.00. Pp 222
ISBN 0 7279 1448 0

Glaucoma is a common disease and an important cause of preventable blindness. This book provides comprehensive information on the evaluation and management of patients with glaucoma. The authors are experienced practitioners who have provided an excellent insight into the problems associated with modern glaucoma practice. The book is easy to read and provides a thorough and up-to-date list of relevant references.

The book covers the topic of primary open-angle glaucoma in great detail, with chapters on the optic disc appearance, perimetry and the relevance of the intraocular pressure. Methods of population screening and the results of population-based studies are covered. There is a good chapter on genetic screening for glaucoma. Major chapters on angle-closure glaucoma are provided and there are individual chapters addressing the important subjects of congenital and secondary glaucomas.

There is a thoughtful chapter on principles of treatment of glaucoma and the medical options, laser therapy and glaucoma surgery are thoroughly reviewed. Innovative chapters on the cost of treatment and the effect of glaucoma on lifestyle are also included.

This textbook is impressive because of the wealth of material included and the clarity of its presentation. It can be used as a textbook to be read from cover-to-cover or can be used to explore selected topics. The authors have clearly

achieved their aim of producing a practical approach to the subject and have highlighted the importance of glaucoma within ophthalmology.

I enjoyed reading the book and would recommend it to both trainee and practitioner.

John F Salmon, Oxford Eye Hospital

Advances in Abdominal Surgery

Edited by Everado Zanella
Kluwer Academic Publishers 1999
Price £75.00. Pp 249
ISBN 0 7923 5988 7

This book is a survey of research work carried out in Italy and funded by the Italian Ministry of the University and of Scientific and Technological Research. The central theme of the book is clinical review and the range of topics covered includes surgical infections, hepatobiliary and colorectal surgery. There are two papers on minimally invasive surgery and three on transplantation.

It is not clear whether these articles have been previously published in peer review journals — but many of them do represent the results of ongoing work and the editor assures us that there will be further editions.

The book focuses on a small market — it is primarily targeted at surgical research workers. It is probable, however, that if one were working in any of the fields covered by the book, past work would be accessed through the standard peer review journals. Where the chapters may be useful is in the extensive literature search which each of them provides.

It is for these reasons that I think it unlikely that this book will sell well. It is not a large book and at £75 it is expensive. The title has the potential to make the browser lift the book off the shelf but the content — with some exceptions within the colorectal section — is in my view not going to separate the surgeon from their money.

Paul Thomas, Whipps Cross Hospital, London