

Surgery

Edited by John D Corson
and Robin C Williamson
Mosby 2000

Price £135.00. Pp 1664
ISBN 0 7234 3069 1

This is a surgical tome, weighing in at nearly 5 kg. This includes a CD-ROM that allows the reader (there is a single user licence agreement) to use many of the photographs and diagrams as teaching aids. There is also a designated website, which directs one to useful problem-solving surgical sites — so one immediately gets the message that this is rather more than a large textbook.

These are fringe benefits, however. The strength of this book is that it is very broadly based, including critical care and common general surgical specialties, and it also dips into allied specialties, such as paediatrics, cardiothoracic and urology. This may seem a strange combination in these days of specialization but it works. It appears that surgeons are being increasingly limited by specialty boundaries as to what



surgery they are allowed to do but educationally are stimulated to maintain a broad general knowledge of what is going on around them. This seems to be the philosophy of this book.

This is a high quality work with many unusual chapters, e.g a chapter on the science of surgical decision making. An added attraction is the inclusion of a practical problem section at the end of each chapter, allowing coverage of new and old surgical dilemmas, which is most informative. The

book is divided into seven colour-coded sections. There is no consecutive pagination — each chapter begins at page one and the index refers to the section, chapter and page. This is different and requires some orientation but it is perfectly logical.

Books such as this are reference texts — it can be carried from shelf to desk but not much further, and this means it is not going to become an examination favourite. It is nevertheless a surgeon's book, and I think it is superior to any of the other comprehensive surgery texts now available. I wish it all success.

Paul Thomas, Whipps Cross Hospital, London

Vitiligo

Edited by Seung-Kyung Hann
and James J Nordlund
Blackwell Science 2000

Price £79.50. Pp 320
ISBN 0 632 050713

This book has contributions from 27 authors and is divided into the following five parts: general topics about vitiligo, clinical presentation, pathogenesis, treatment and topics related to vitiligo. Overall, this structure works well. The book contains a wealth of information about vitiligo, and the logical subdivisions of the text allow for easy identification of specific topics.

In the foreword, Dr Aaron Lerner emphasizes the major significance of vitiligo to patients suffering from the condition. It was therefore disappointing to discover that only three pages were dedicated to the psychological effects of vitiligo. This is in striking contrast to the 19 pages dedicated to alternative therapies, which, in this reviewer's opinion, are mainly expensive placebos which do little to clear vitiligo or relieve its psychological burden.

The sections on pathogenesis of vitiligo are very detailed and provide an up-to-date review of this complex area.

Treatment of vitiligo is also comprehensive, although the section on psoralen plus ultraviolet A photochemotherapy is rather brief given that this remains the gold standard treatment. The short sections on depigmentation therapy and micro-pigmentation are also good for clinicians who may be unaware of these potentially useful therapies.

Overall this book is a timely addition to the dermatology literature. For those who are interested in vitiligo, this is an essential book to purchase, but it is of limited relevance to the wider dermatology and medical community.

A Anstey, Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust

Medical Short Cases for Medical Students

REJ Ryder, MA Mir, EA Freeman
Blackwell Science 2000

Price £14.95. Pp 304
ISBN 0 632 05729 7

This text cleverly combines clinical skills with self-assessment case scenarios. Based upon the medical short case examinations, the authors have pulled together the 100 cases most commonly encountered on the big day.

The 19 chapters are named after the examiner's instruction, e.g. 'examine

this patient's legs', 'examine this patient's hands'. After discussion of the essential examination to perform, individual case scenarios are presented, e.g. spastic paraparesis, peripheral neuropathy, hemiplegia, or the swollen knee for the 'leg' chapter. For each of these cases, the expected clinical findings are described and differentials listed; photographs reinforce most of the cases.

This text makes no attempt to describe the management of these conditions, for which the reader would have to refer to other resources. Equally, this text does not describe the most commonly encountered diseases and presentations in clinical practice. It is primarily a revision tool for undergraduates in preparation for their final clinical examinations, where the weird and wonderful cases they encounter are only ever seen in textbooks and in front of two examiners.

As an undergraduate preparing for finals, I have found this a really valuable book. Not only does it highlight the salient aspects of its cases, it also encourages the reader to think laterally and to consider other differentials and possible causes for the clinical findings.

James S Dawson, final year medical student, Leicester University