

RES MEDICA

Journal of the Royal Medical Society



Book Reviews

Abstract

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ISSN: 2051-7580 (Online) ISSN: 0482-3206 (Print)

Res Medica is published by the Royal Medical Society, 5/5 Bristo Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9AL

Res Medica, Autumn 1961, 3(1): 65-66, 68

doi: [10.2218/resmedica.v3i1.381](https://doi.org/10.2218/resmedica.v3i1.381)

BOOK REVIEWS

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New editions of this textbook have been appearing regularly and frequently since its first publication just twenty-two years ago. This is undoubted proof of its popularity and a reflection of the steady advances Medical Treatment has made over the years.

It has been written for students and practitioners by an eminent group of clinicians but yet maintains a very high standard of uniformity and clarity. Careful and skilled editing has played no small part in achieving this.

The systematic arrangement makes consultation very easy and the style allows for pleasant reading. Reliable and current methods of treatment are presented without the nuisance of discussing the latest fads in therapeutics. The clinician can feel sure that the information he obtains is sound and worthwhile.

With the prominence of the geriatric problem today it was decided to enlarge the section devoted to the Care of the Aged. Much of it includes simple daily habits and everyday routine. One might even dare to say—commonsense. But it is these small points which make all the difference to a successful end and which are so easily overlooked. It is as well that they should be so thoroughly explained.

There is also a new chapter on Analgesics and the relief of pain. Seeing that it is pain which frequently brings a patient to his doctor and which causes him the greatest concern, it is surprising how seldom its relief is ever dealt with in adequate detail. This addition sums up all the applications of the reliable analgesics, and puts the patient's problems in a better perspective.

For the anxious student hoping to pass his finals and the worried practitioner wondering what next to do, this book is a necessity. The editors must be congratulated on a publication of tremendous value.

E.S.Q.

THE MEDICAL MANAGEMENT OF ACUTE POISONING. by Gordon Cumming. B.Sc., Ph.D., M.B., Ch.B., A.R.I.C. Cassell. 10s. 6d. net. Pp. 120.

This little book is intended for the casualty officer or G.P. and the final year student. It outlines the main physiological principles and then spends a chapter each on Carbon Monoxide, Barbiturates, Salicylates and Alcohol, that is the poisons most commonly met. Public Health and Paediatric aspects are also dealt with. Although such an immense amount of ground is covered in a very short space clarity is never lost and the book is most readable.

Dr. Myre Sim's chapter on the psychiatric aspects of poisoning is as concise and clear as the rest of the book and can be read with benefit by all psychiatry students.

This is just the book to have beside you when you are informed that a new admission, suffering from poisoning is on his way.

R.A.B.

THE PATHOGENESIS OF ESSENTIAL HYPERTENSION. Proceedings of the Prague Symposium 1960. State Medical Publishing House, Prague, 1961. Price 50s.

This volume contains the proceedings of a symposium arranged by the Czechoslovak Cardiological Society and the World Health Organisation, under the chairmanship of Professor C. Heymons.

The lectures tackled the problem over a broad front, embracing the epidemiology of the disease and the influence of nervous vascular control and higher nervous centres, as well as alterations in haemodynamics and vessel wall and general metabolic factors underlying its causation. The diversity of these topics emphasises the widespread dislocation which accompanies a disease too frequently considered simply in terms of raised blood pressure.

However, although the Symposium discussed many questions it provided few of the answers. The first session, devoted to considering whether essential hypertension was a disease entity or

merely embraced levels at the high end of a normal distribution curve of blood pressures, led to no agreement on this basic point. A most valuable point brought out again and again during the conference was the inadequacy of present data and the need for more research. The Symposium, however, was more notable for the discussion of old problems than the presentation of new work.

This volume is essentially a reference book and of little general appeal to medical students or practitioners. Nevertheless it could provide anyone approaching the subject of essential hypertension with an insight into present views on its pathogenesis.

The book is poorly produced by current British or American standards.

J.A.C.

THE RED CELL, by T. A. J. Prankerd, M.D. Published by Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd. Price 32s. 6d. net.

This compact little text book is intended for those interested in the academic study and research into problems of the red cell. In his preface, the author points out the great division that has grown up in work on this subject, namely, that between the experience of the physiologist and the interpretation of the pathologist.

An attempt is made to combine the two in a single volume, but the related sciences still stand very far apart, and the bridges thrown over the gap are few in number.

In dealing with this difficult subject, the author has been faced with the problem of extracting information from the large number of references, and has chosen those which reflect his own view. This is however made plain. It represents a clear and concise picture, not over-complicated by the mass of conflicting evidence usually found in such publications.

Throughout, the separate chapters are well set out, and follow logically one to the next. This enables the reader to follow the information, which in places is highly technical, a vital test in a book dealing with such a complex subject.

On the whole, the book is not suited for ordinary undergraduate study, being more for those interested in the special study of physiology or pathology of the blood, and in this respect is made more valuable by the long list of references.

In conclusion, the book definitely deserves a place in any medical library, not for an initial understanding of the subject, but for reference and verification purposes.

D.H.K.S.

THE USE OF DRAWING IN THE STUDY OF ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY, by Charles R. Bannister, M.C.S.P. Pp. 39, numerous illustrations. Published by E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., Edinburgh and London, 1961. Price 17s. 6d.

One of the most formidable difficulties facing the pre-clinical student is the amount of hard memory-work involved in learning anatomy, and there is no doubt that drawing is a most effective, economical method of study. Moreover, the ability to produce a good drawing on an examination paper is especially valuable.

In this little book, Mr Bannister suggests methods of study involving drawing, advising different techniques for different purposes — initial study, revision, and for presentation in examinations. He thus attempts to provide a rational scheme of work for learning by drawing. The artistically untalented will be particularly interested in the section dealing with the technique of actually making a picture—it is emphasised that anyone can draw well enough for these requirements.

Since this is in no sense a text-book, it seems questionable whether many people will want to pay so much as 17/6 for it. However, the quality of printing and of the almost too profuse illustrations is excellent, although the wire binding leaves something to be desired. Certainly, students beginning the study of anatomy and perhaps feeling a little overwhelmed may well find the methods advocated very effective.

R.L.M.

SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS IN CLINICAL MEDICINE, by E. Noble Chamberlain, M.D., M.Sc., F.R.C.P. Seventh Edition, published by John Wright and Sons, Ltd., Bristol. Pp. 569, many illustrations. 45s.

This book comes from the same publishers as Hamilton Bailey's 'Physical Signs in Clinical Surgery', but it is not such a useful or interesting book. It is probably easier to illustrate surgical lesions than to explain breath sounds or heart murmurs—but even allowing for this difference, Hamilton Bailey succeeded in giving his book a very personal sort of distinction which Chamberlain's book lacks. Perhaps it is unfair to compare this book with one so exceptional as Hamilton Bailey's; after all, Chamberlain's book is now in its seventh edition since 1936, and is well known, especially in the south. In general, the physical signs as well explained and many of the photographs and diagrams are excellent. A few are in great need of replacement, such as an appallingly unrealistic drawing of the different

varieties of sputum. One would have thought that the illustrations of the optic fundus in optic neuritis and optic atrophy could have been replaced more usefully by diagrams of hypertensive and diabetic retinopathy—the latter is not even mentioned in the text. Percussion of the heart is advocated although many physicians now feel this is worthless as a routine procedure. There is a section on clinical chemistry which gives useful details of side-room tests and an inadequate selection of the routine laboratory tests.

In this latest edition a short chapter on medical history has been included, together with a number of drawings of famous men of medicine in the text; but somehow the author has not written such a fascinating account as Hamilton Bailey, who enlivened his text with biographical footnotes, anecdotes and case histories.

One cannot help feeling that a book of medicine in which the theoretical background must be omitted or minimised is in some way unsatisfactory. Whether a book of this sort is a substitute for good bedside teaching and clinical experience is doubtful; but for all of these criticisms and reservations, this is a good book filled with practical and accurate information. For those who feel the need of a book on clinical methods this can be recommended as the best available.

J.A.R.F.

ANATOMY OF THE EYE AND THE ORBIT, by Eugene Wolff. 5th edition, revised by R. J. Last. H. K. Lewis & Co. Ltd., London, 1961. £4 4s—pp. 489.

This new edition of the late Eugene Wolff's well known book has been efficiently revised by Last without impairing its essential qualities. It is a type of monograph which may well come into more general use to save students and clinicians from the difficulty of coping with the many separate and often compressed sections found in comprehensive text-books.

An acquaintance with the basic medical sciences is naturally assumed

but the descriptions in this book are clear, concise and adequate. A few items which at first sight seem redundant, such as the description of the paranasal sinuses, are soon shown to have clinical applications. The terminology has been brought up to date without being too rigid and eponyms are used where they are necessary or informative. Only a few additions have had to be made so as to include such things as electron microscopic and bio-microscopic work.

The scope of the work goes beyond the orbit to anything which may be of importance to those working on it. The illustrations are excellent and the work can safely be recommended to undergraduates or to graduates taking up the speciality.

R.G.I.

ASSESSMENT OF THE ACTIVITY OF DISEASE. J. S. Lawrence, M.D., M.R.C.P. 252 pp.; 34 tables, 37 illus. H. K. Lewis & Co. Ltd., 1961. £2 2s.

This volume can claim to be the first really comprehensive work dealing with the Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate to appear in the English language.

The first half of the text considers the theoretical aspects of changes in E.S.R. in relation to overall changes in the plasma constituents, occurring in disease situations. A chapter summarising laboratory methods of determining these changes follows.

The remainder of the book consists of a systematic discussion of the changes occurring in individual diseases, and it is this part that will probably be of the most interest to the average student.

Throughout, the author maintains a very lucid style of writing, in spite of the large numbers of figures he has to convey at times.

As will be gathered from the above, this is a work of prime interest to the clinical pathologist, although a perusal of it will help to clarify not a few problems in relation to general medicine.

The diagrams all make their point clearly, while the printing and binding are of a high standard.

P.J.S.