

REVIEWS

GUIDE TO PSYCHIATRY

By Myre Sim

E & S Livingstone, Edin. and Lond. 1968. Pp. 1055. Price: 60 shillings

The author states that the aim of this book is to "cater for a variety of readers, including psychiatrists in training, physicians, general practitioners, medical students, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and nurses". As such, he has achieved at the expense of the loss of some depth, a very readable book. With such an aim, it must of a necessity be didactic, and his conscious effort to keep himself neutral amongst the many schools of psychology and psychiatry serves to commit him even more evidently as a "non-ally", for neutrality can be as much an attitude as positivism or negativity.

A good general account of the prevailing views of psychodynamics and psychiatric positions is given with the author's own view point very much in evidence. The sections on organic psychiatry, drug addiction, psychoneurosis, social psychiatry, and psychopharmacology are lucid and pleasurable to read, and the chapter on legal aspects of psychiatry deals in extenso with current controversies about criminal responsibility, psychiatric evidence in court and professional secrecy. The section on abortion makes interesting reading in the light of recent activities in changes of abortion law in Britain and Singapore, and even taking into account the obvious personal attitude of the author in this

subject, the arguments he marshalls are relevant and worthy of attention particularly in his frank admission of the inadequacy of psychiatrist, in prognostication such as in the unpredictable field of puerperal psychosis. His quotation of Donnelly that doctors "should be doctors of medicine, not socio-economic prophets" should caution the over-enthused medical reformers.

Details of drugs and techniques of treatment make the book appear unbalanced to lay readers, but such inclusion is unavoidable if the book is to retain an appeal for psychiatric trained people. The intention to provide for non-psychiatric readers leads to the inclusion of statements such as "psychiatrists who had to label these patients would sometimes *perjure* themselves...". However, these piquant passages may in fact remind psychiatric practitioners of the risk and illogicalities that can rise in their practice, as a result of the uncertainties of present day psychiatry, which is yet not quite a science. A minor point of irritation is the incompleteness of reference for some of the sources do not appear in the reference list which occupies 55 pages. On the whole, it is an interesting book well-worth reading through.

Gwee Ah Leng

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FLUID THERAPY AND DISORDERS OF ELECTROLYTE BALANCE

By W. H. Taylor

Revised Reprint 1967. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford and Edinburgh

This is a small handy volume based on day-by-day experience of the management of patients with diverse disorders of fluid balance. Containing five sections dealing with classification of disorders, diagnosis, treatment, special problems of fluid balance and tables and diets, it is excellent for ready reference and because of the practical approach, the information sought is easily available and concisely presented. No elaborate mathematical formulae or chemical knowledge is employed, the instances given are drawn from actual cases so that application becomes a simple affair.

In the treatment of diabetic coma, the advice is to give 20 units soluble insulin subcutaneously

in mild precoma once the diagnosis is made, 60 units intramuscularly cases of severe precoma and 100 units intramuscularly to the unconscious patient. These differences seem to be difficult to explain. Also insulin dosages tied to colour of Benedict's test of urine can be deceptive in view of a number of pitfalls.

However, there is no doubt that this is an extremely valuable book for any doctor who has to treat patients with electrolyte and fluid problems, and with its handy size and low price, it should find its way to the pocket of most hospital practitioners.

Gwee Ah Leng

OBSTETRICS

By J. M. Holmes

(Second Edition. 1969. Balliere, London)

This book is presented as one of the "Concise Medical Textbooks" for students preparing for the M.B., B.S. examination. In 289 pages of text the author attempts to cover the entire field of the art and science of obstetrics, with additional chapters on drug dependence in pregnancy, placental function, placental insufficiency, foetal distress, asphyxia neonatorum, maternal diseases in pregnancy, obstetrics anaesthesia, psychiatry in childbearing, X-rays and ultrasonics, vital statistics and even circumcision of the neonate.

The approach and treatment of each chapter is generally sound. However, trying to present a subject such as obstetrics in an over-concise fashion inevitably leads to the omission of much essential detail and "short-circuiting" of many practical procedures. This makes the book unsuitable and unsafe for the undergraduate beginner in obstetrics who will find it difficult to

grasp the subject intelligently. The many gaps will give the uninitiated student an incomplete and patchy concept of obstetrics. Perhaps due to over-simplification, some procedures are open to criticism e.g. on page 213 it is advocated that in the management of the second twin, correction of a malpresentation is to be followed by rupture of the membranes. There is no mention of the very real risk of cord prolapse or the place of internal version. On page 171 one cannot help taking note of a glaring and dangerous error, namely, the intra-amniotic injection of hypertonic glucose to induce labour in cases of intra-uterine foetal death. This hazardous method of induction has long been abandoned.

In summary, this book should only be used as a companion to a recommended full-length text and under the guidance of a competent teacher.

S. H. Tow

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INTRODUCTION TO MEDICAL MICROBIOLOGY

By C. W. Potter, B.Sc., Ph.D., J.F. Archer, M.B., B.Ch., Dipt. Bact. and G.C. Schild, B.Sc., Ph.D.

London, Butterworth (1968). Pp. 209, Illustrated. Price: 45 shillings

The introduction has in a nutshell, the history of microbiology from the time of Antoni van Leeuwenhoek some 200 years ago, to the present day where microorganisms are involved in autoimmune diseases, leukaemias and even cancers. In the subsequent chapters, the principles of the different types of microscopes, including the electron microscope are described and illustrated diagrammatically. The compositions of media used for the culture and isolation of fungi, bacteria and viruses are found in the chapter, 'the culture of bacteria and viruses'. Sufficient details are given for this chapter to be used as a quick reference in the media room of a bacteriology laboratory.

In the chapter on antibiotics and chemotherapeutic agents, including antiviral agents, there is a section on factors influencing the choice of antibiotics and the modes of action of these agents which would interest the clinicians. These are not found in the older books.

The fact that this book was originally written for the dental students shows up in the chapter on the infections of the oral cavity, with its theories of the cause of dental caries and the tests for caries activity, which are not found in a text-book on microbiology.

Half of the book is devoted to the common pathogenic bacteria and viruses. They are treated individually and according to the systems e.g. the respiratory system, the alimentary system, where they usually cause infection.

Most text-books on medical microbiology tend to go into great detail while others are too concise when they are meant for the nurses or just for general knowledge. This one has enough details without being tedious. It is certainly more than just an introduction to the subject. If one understands all that's in the book, one would have enough confidence to teach medical microbiology. Perhaps some experience is required to do the practicals in a laboratory.

Moses Yu

A SHORT TEXTBOOK OF MEDICINE

By J.C. Houston, M.D., F.R.C.P., C.L. Joiner, M.D., F.R.C.P. and J.R. Trounce, M.D., F.R.C.P.
The English Universities Press Ltd., London. 1968. Pp. 588. 30 shillings

This book must be judged by the authors' purpose. They are practising physicians who set out not to write a tome for reference, but a short text book for the average clinical student, and they have admirably achieved their purpose. It is concise enough not to be boring yet does not miss the essentials. The scope covered is enough for the final M.B. examination and could be used with profit by dental students and

general practitioners who are anxious to keep up-to-date with current medical practice and advances.

To encourage wider reading and consultation of original sources, a few key references are appended to the principal chapters.

For its price it is a worthwhile buy.

Lee Yong Kiat

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MAYER-GROSS, SLATER AND ROTH, CLINICAL PSYCHIATRY (THIRD EDITION)

Edited by Eliot Slater, M.D., F.R.C.P., D.P.M. and Martin Roth, M.D., F.R.C.P., D.P.M.
Bailliere, Tindall and Cassell, London. Pp. 904. Price: 120 shillings

From its first edition CLINICAL PSYCHIATRY has gained rapid recognition in Britain. The present Third Edition is timely as new and important findings in the fields of psychiatry have taken place. Presentation is academically inclined and the authors would not hesitate to pin point areas requiring further investigation.

The reader is also reminded of some old established views now being overhauled. The

loneliness in the aged is more symptomatic of an underlying psychiatric disorder and neurotic breakdown in the aged is more prevalent than previously held are examples. It is indispensable for any serious students in psychiatry and a good reference book for psychiatrists who are not too analytically biased.

M. F. Yap

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THE EPILEPSIES, MODERN DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

By J. M. Sutherland and Howard Tait
E & S Livingstone, London. 1969. Pp. 128. Price: 25 shillings

Epilepsy, though a common disease, is often confusing to students and practitioners, principally because of the multiplicity of classification, and the complexity of basic studies. This book is written to give practical clinical information and in doing so, the authors avoid most of the controversial points and draw heavily from their own experience. The style is simple, and the points are clearly made. An inclusion of a summary at the end of each chapter is probably designed to please the student, and the purposeful exclusion of a bibliography seems to be based on dubious reasons.

Good sensible advice on medico-legal positions, genetic counselling, and drug regimen is given, and the message about the proper use of EEG and L.P. is well made. The classification employed is a practical one and based on sound reasoning, and the stress on getting the patient well rather than free from fits is an admirable one. Altogether, it is a useful book for those who want information on the diagnostic and treatment aspects of epilepsy and yet are unable to spend many weary hours searching the monotonous literature on the subject accumulated over the years.

Gwee Ah Leng

TEXTBOOK OF MEDICAL TREATMENT BY VARIOUS AUTHORS

Edited by Sir Derrick Dunlop, Stanley Alstead and Alstair G. Macgregor
Livingstone, Edinburgh and London. 1968

The 1968 11th Edition of this well-known book only two years after the 10th Edition speaks of the popularity of this textbook. Its new clearer format makes for easier reading but the binding could be stronger, for the cover has come off! The book shows evidence of extensive revision and two new sections have been added in anticoagulants and ill health due to Drugs.

I find the book up-to-date, extremely practical and full of sound advice. Although necessarily short in some sections, the field of treatment covered is adequate for students as well as for general practitioners. It can be warmly recommended as one of the best textbooks in medical treatment.

Khoo Oon Teik

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MEDICINE, EAST AND WEST, A DIRECT COMPARISON

By Dr. Gwee Ah Leng

Koya Publishing Co., Singapore. Price: \$1.50 cts.

The author has managed to present in 60 small pages a very lucid and challenging comparison between traditional Chinese and Western Medicine. He is in a unique position to write such a book for he is not only a Chinese scholar educated in Western medicine but has close link with Chinese Medicine through family ties.

The sequence of the chapters is aptly chosen as it starts with generalities and history ending up with a personal appraisal which is fair and balanced yet stimulating. To the novice this pocket book is eminently readable and contains sufficient information to give him a fair insight into the similarities and differences between

the two forms of medicine. Those with some knowledge of Chinese and Western Medicine will find this book illuminating and useful. It may be argued that the title should strictly have been "Medicine, Chinese and West" but this is much less euphonious and the title chosen does not really detract from the basic aims of the author. Perhaps important references may be included with advantage. With improved printing and corrected typographical errors, this book ought to find its way into the shelves of all practising doctors and libraries all over the world.

C. C. S. Toh

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