

## **CASES IN CHEMICAL PATHOLOGY : A DIAGNOSTIC APPROACH**

by R N WALMSLEY, L R WATKINSON, E S C KOAY  
1988. P G Publishing

SINGAPORE MED J 1990; NO 31: 87

I thoroughly enjoyed this book, reading it as it was from a physician's viewpoint. I like the way the authors have approached the problem - a case presentation, the differential diagnosis, the investigation, the case discussion, final diagnosis and therapy. It would prove a useful book for general reading and as a mini-reference for the less common clinical problems. Yet, only one of the authors is a medical doctor who presently works in a Department of Chemical Pathology. Nevertheless, the advice he gives is succinct and he does not overstep his limits of clinical knowledge. Furthermore, many statements are backed by references in the clinical medical journals so that the reader can verify them for himself.

The selling point for this book must be the way the authors have approached such problems. If you are one of those who enjoys reading clinico-pathological conference reports, then these clinico-biochemical pathology case studies are equally enjoyable. The index is very useful as it allows easy access to the relevant pages once a problem has been identified, say, hyperbilirubinaemia.

It is a small book, less than 400 pages, and it is the second edition with a local doctor (PhD) being the new

third author. Doctors must continue to learn how to use the appropriate tests and investigations offered by the chemical pathology laboratory. Costs of health care are ever increasing, in large part contributed to by the plethora of laboratory investigations that are ordered. Should you order the test, do you know how to interpret the results, is there any significant change to the management of the patient arising from the test result? This book goes a long way in helping the clinician find answers to these questions.

To me, for its price, I would recommend it not only to bio-chemists and chemical pathologists but also the clinicians, be they young and in medical school, older as eager practising doctors and even older still when grey hairs signify years of experience when they think they already know everything but yet have not heard of some of the tests elegantly explained in the text. All in all, a good book, a commendable effort.

DR Y C CHEE  
Tan Tock Seng Hospital

## **HANDBOOK OF CLINICAL PSYCHIATRY**

by W F Tsoi, E H Kua, L P Kok  
2nd Edition. 1988. PG Publishing

The first edition of Clinical Psychiatry for Family Physicians has been retitled in its second edition The Handbook of Clinical Psychiatry intended as a guide for medical students and family physicians. The new edition has been thoroughly revised in scope, content and arrangement.

The first chapter on introduction deals with the meaning of mental illness, the models of mental illness, the aetiology of mental disorders and the classification of mental disorders. The account is rather brief, assumes some basic knowledge and the uninitiated is likely to follow with difficulty. The psychiatric examination and common symptoms of mental disorders are adequately covered.

The chapters on Organic Mental Disorders, Schizophrenia and Paranoid Disorders are fairly comprehensive. Local figures whenever available are included. The grouping and description of the Affective and Neurotic Disorders reflect the lack of uniformity among the psychiatrists in these areas. The Psychosomatic Disorders are controversial in concept and generally omitted in modern psychiatric classification. It is probably included because the term is popular among general practitioners. The Sleep and Eating Disorders are well laid out. The management of Insomnia should be of particular help to the family physicians. The Psychosexual Disorders are described in some details and are informative. Alcohol-

ism is well covered. However insufficient attention is paid to the danger and complication of drug dependence. The approach to Personality Disorders is rather unique and practical and makes sense. The section on Mental Retardation is fairly lengthy but no mention is made on counselling and prevention.

Separate chapters are given to psychological treatment, pharmacological treatment and Electro-Convulsive Therapy which are beyond the needs and practice of the average family physicians. The chapter on Psychiatric Emergencies should be useful to all who deal with them. The Mental Disorders and Treatment Act and the Criminal Procedure Code have been simplified and contain the essentials. The chapter on Basic Psychology provides a quick introduction to the subject and some working knowledge of mental functions.

The book would have been more complete if some common psychiatric problems in childhood and puerperium are also included. In terms of usefulness it occupies a position between the needs of the medical students/family physicians and the junior trainees. It is a pity no references were given to local figures and findings.

DR K T CHEE  
WOODBIDGE HOSPITAL