

Books

A Sceptic's Medical Dictionary*

By Michael O'Donnell. Pp 209. R170. London: BMJ. 1997. ISBN 0-7279-1204-6.

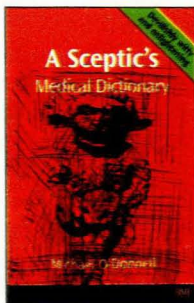
'Aaronical. A high priestly, pontifical role that some doctors think appropriate for their profession'

Thus the tone is set in this first entry in *A Sceptic's Medical Dictionary*, which contains new definitions of common medical jargon and verbiage, along with published examples to support these.

And nothing – and no-one – is sacred as author Michael O'Donnell, a former family doctor and currently a journalist and BBC radio broadcaster, demolishes the holy cows of medicine with wit and irony.

For example: 'Generalists. Doctors who treat what they assume you have. As opposed to specialists who assume you have what they treat'

Inevitably the book has a strong British slant, with a number of phrases pertaining to the National Health Service and happenings on the British health front but it is of no less enjoyment for this.



Best sellers

The top three best selling books from the MASA Multimedia Book Department in the last month were:



Procedures in General Practice edited by John Stuart Brown. R297. BMJ, 1997. ISBN 0-7279-1035-3.

Illustrated Signs in Clinical Medicine by K C McHardy et al. R80. Churchill Livingstone, 1997. ISBN 0-443-05545-9.

Resuscitation of Babies at Birth (Handbook). R143. BMJ, 1997. ISBN 0-7279-1179-1.

* Book titles marked may be ordered directly from MASA Multimedia, Book Department, Private Bag X1, Pinelands, 7430, tel. (021) 531-3081, fax (021) 531-4126, e-mail masact@iafrica.com

But – not wishing to be charged with 'hyperexegesis' – I must leave you to check out whether a patient could be 'off his trolley' in a 'Bottomley ward'.

Highly recommended!

Jonathan Spencer Jones

Neurological Investigations*

Edited by RAC Hughes. Pp. 511. £51. London: BMJ. 1997. ISBN 0-7279-1080-9.

This is an outstanding production by 26 prominent neurologists, neuroradiologists and other specialists involved in specialised investigations of the nervous system. Most authors are from the UK. The book is the third in a series produced by the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry* and meets up to the stated intention in the introduction, that it 'provides the comprehensive guide needed by all who look after neurological diseases . . . to provide a sound diagnostic basis for practice and research'.

Sixteen chapters address the merits of investigative techniques including electro-encephalography, various imaging techniques, nerve conduction studies, electromyography and interpretation of biochemical investigations. Other chapters address investigational approaches to disorders of balance, peripheral neuropathy, muscle disease, neurogenic bladder and inherited metabolic disorders.

All chapters are very well referenced, most with over 100 references and the book generally provides a balanced perspective.

It should be said however that this is a book for the generalist and those actively involved in research in any particular area will, as one might expect in a book of this nature, find it of insufficient depth.

For the generalist the book is well illustrated, a pleasure to read with the evident reward of being brought up to date in areas of the literature otherwise not readily available.

S Louw

Genetics. A Popular Guide to the Principles of Human Heredity

Parts 1, 2 and 3 (Videos). Animated Biochemical Productions. R1 200 (including postage, import duty and VAT). Westmead, Australia: Animated Biomedical Productions (Westmead Neurological Centre). 1997.

The three video tapes, totalling just over one hour, review current concepts concerning medical genetics. The quality of the graphics is excellent and the presentation is lucid.

The first tape deals with cytogenetics, DNA structure, cell division and embryology. In the second tape, the application

of Mendel's laws is described with examples from the human genetic situation. Cytogenetic disorders are also brought into focus, but there is no mention of multifactorial inheritance or environmental influences. The third tape is a mixed bag containing brief discussions of diverse topics including gene therapy, cancer genetics and recombinant molecular technology. Immunogenetics and the Human Genome Project are also mentioned, as are ethical issues.

The first two tapes would be suitable for school children taking biology at the matric level and would also be ideal for pre-clinical medical students (who often seem to forget most of the biology that they learned during their matric year). These tapes would also be relevant in the teaching of nurses and paramedics. The third tape lacks focus and would be suitable for a general medical audience with time on their hands!

The cost of the three tapes is reasonable in terms of the content and graphics, but as they would probably only be used once in any annual teaching course, they would be an expensive luxury in the South African context.

P Beighton

Books received

The receipt of these books is acknowledged, and this listing must be regarded as sufficient return for the courtesy of the sender. Books that appear to be of particular interest will be reviewed as space permits. The *SAMJ* does not publish unsolicited reviews.

Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary.* Fifth Edition. Edited by Elizabeth A Martin. R76.95. Cape Town: Oxford University Press. 1998. ISBN 0-19-280075-2.

Side Effects of Drugs Annual 20 - 1996.* Edited by J K Aronson. Pp. xxi + 502. NLG390/US\$240.75. Amsterdam: Elsevier Science. 1997. ISBN 0-444-82532-0.

Managed Care, Outcomes, and Quality. A Practical Guide.* By Steven F Isenberg. Pp. xxii + 343. DM149. Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1998. ISBN 0-86577-687-3.

Operative Cancer Surgery. Volume 2. Breast, Endocrine and Spinal Cord. Edited by Ian Burn. Pp. vii + 79. Illustrated. £75. London: Farrand Press. 1996. ISBN 1-85083-029-0.

Healing Photon. The Science and Art of Blood Irradiation Therapy. By Kenneth J Dillon. Pp. iv + 180. US\$22. Washington: Scientia Press. 1998. ISBN 0-9642976-5-5.

1,2-Dichloroethane.* Concise International Chemical Assessment Document No. 1. IPCS. Pp iv + 28. SwFr13. Geneva: WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-153001-4.

3,3'-Dichlorobenzidine.* Concise International Chemical Assessment Document No. 2. IPCS. Pp iv + 21. SwFr13. Geneva: WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-153002-2.

1,1,2,2-Tetrachloroethane.* Concise International Chemical Assessment Document No. 3. IPCS. Pp iv + 28. SwFr13. Geneva: WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-153003-0.

Methyl Methacrylate.* Concise International Chemical Assessment Document No. 4. IPCS. Pp iv + 40. SwFr16. Geneva: WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-153004-9.

Limonene.* Concise International Chemical Assessment Document No. 5. IPCS. Pp iv + 32. SwFr13. Geneva: WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-153005-7.

o-Toluidine.* Concise International Chemical Assessment Document No. 7. IPCS. Pp iv + 18. SwFr13. Geneva: WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-153007-3.

