

Books/Boeke

Neurobiology

Neurobiology: 2 ed. Ed. by Gordon M. Shepherd. Pp. xiv + 689. Illustrated. R74,50. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1988.

I have looked at this book for about a year to determine its value and, of course, to update my knowledge of neurophysiology, neuropathology and neurobiology. It is an outstanding work and can be advised as reading material for anyone who is interested in the neurosciences, no matter at what level that interest may be. Unfortunately there is no university course in this country geared to this kind of text, which indicates the sad state of affairs in which the neurosciences exist here.

This book should, however, be on the shelf of every practising

neurologist, neurosurgeon or neuroscientist involved in teaching. It has a well-balanced text with a great deal of comparative neuro-anatomy and neurophysiology in a wide biological context. It makes sense of information which could, for the novice, be confusing and rather awesome. Handling of the literature is extensive and up to date. Any student dealing with any aspect of neurosciences, whether medical student or student in the professions allied to medicine, will only gain by consulting the appropriate chapters, and will probably end up by reading much more. Anyone qualified in any of these hyperspecialities in the neurological sciences and has retained a basic inquisitiveness, will find it a delight. At this price it is a very good buy.

J. C. de Villiers

Medical physiology

Textbook of Medical Physiology. Ed. by A. C. Guyton. Pp. xli + 1014. Illustrated. Kent: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich. 1991.

Some 35 years ago, the first edition of this textbook appeared and has proved so popular that it has been repeatedly updated. This eighth edition has been suitably revised and, I am sure, will once again appear on the list of recommended textbooks in many departments of physiology throughout the world.

As always, the contents section is quite exceptional since it clearly sets out the important subdivisions within each system. This allows the student to get a proper perspective and overview of physiology. Similarly, the index appears exhaustive and the cross-referencing is most useful.

Within the body of the text, the sections and subsections are clearly defined, which makes studying easier. Also, the references at the end of each chapter allow the serious student to delve more deeply into the subject.

To those schooled in the metric system and SI units, the book abounds in irritating inconsistencies and errors. For example, in Figs 73 - 6 and 73 - 11 body temperature is given in °F, while in Figs 73 - 7 and 73 - 8 head temperature is given in °C. Plasma calcium in Fig. 79 - 3 is given as mg/100 ml, in Fig. 79 - 9 as mmol/l and Fig. 79 - 10 as mg/dl. In Fig. 83 - 1 length is given in centimeters while in Fig. 83 - 8 height is in inches. Electrolytes are given mainly as mmol/l, but mEq/l is also used, while in the

case of non-electrolytes mg/dl appears. Also, the abbreviation gm is used instead of g.

All in all, though, this remains a most useful textbook that can be recommended to both undergraduates and postgraduates alike.

P. C. Belonje

Bilingual heart and stress booklets

The Healthy Heart/Die Gesonde Hart. Ed. by G. Jackson. **Coping with Stress/Oorwin Stres.** Ed. by T. Trauer. Pp. 77. Illustrated. R19,95. Cape Town: Tafelberg. 1990.

These small books are intended for the general public but were so well written that I enjoyed reading them myself. They are part of a series entitled *A Family Guide to Healthy Living* and are available in English and Afrikaans at the reasonable price of R19,95 + GST.

Not only do they deal with the symptoms, signs and treatment of stress and heart disease, but they enable readers to evaluate their own level of risk and, more important, spell out how the risks can be reduced.

Doctors may confidently recommend these books to their patients, and, in view of the average doctor's lifestyle, would also benefit from reading them themselves.