

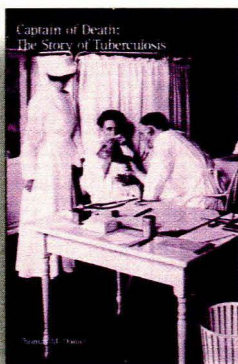


BOOKS

CAPTAIN OF DEATH. THE STORY OF TUBERCULOSIS*

Thomas M Daniel. Pp 296. Illustrated. £30/US\$49.95. University of Rochester Press. 1997. ISBN 1-878822-96-9.

Thomas Daniel, Professor Emeritus of Medicine and International Health at the Case Western Reserve University in the United States of America, has spent the greater part of his working life studying a variety of aspects of tuberculosis. With a lifetime of experience of tuberculosis as background, he has written a book filled with personal and historical anecdotes, intended for general readers but which will interest anyone who is involved in the management or study of tuberculosis.



His technique in this book is to link fairly detailed biographies of famous researchers and tuberculosis sufferers with aspects of the history or biology of the disease. So there is the familiar litany of famous names – John Keats, Robert Louis Stevenson, Frederic Chopin and George Orwell to name but a few. The fulminating course of tuberculosis in John Keats is contrasted with its grumbling chronic features in Stevenson, and in the process attention is drawn to what we know now of the immunology of tuberculosis.

Daniel asserts in this book that the interaction of tuberculosis and mankind antedates the domestication of cattle and that

M. tuberculosis did not have its origin as a descendant of a bovine strain as is often stated, and gives references to support this opinion. He also suggests, again with documentation, that Rudolf Virchow did not attend Robert Koch's famous exposition of the cause of tuberculosis presented before the Physiological Society in Berlin on 24 March 1882.

Although considerable attention is given to Selman Waksman and the development of streptomycin, the contributions of Jorge Lehman and Gerhard Domagk to the treatment of tuberculosis are disappointingly not even acknowledged in passing. At least Domagk had the consolation of receiving a Nobel Prize, while Lehman had to endure the indignity of seeing the Nobel Prize awarded to Waksman in the very city where para-aminosalicylic acid (PAS) had been administered to a tuberculosis patient a month before streptomycin was used for the first time.

There are several minor typographical errors, but these do not detract unduly from this otherwise entertaining and instructive book. There is an extensive glossary clarifying the medical terminology used and making the book readily accessible to the lay public. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book, but with the devaluation of the rand the price of the book is approximately R300 (which works out to about a rand a page) and this will probably place it out of the reach of its intended readership.

P R Donald

BEST SELLERS

The top three best-selling books from the Health and Medical Publishing Book Department in the last month were:

Washington Manual of Medical Therapeutics. 29th Edition. Edited by Charles F Carey, Hans Lee and Keith F Woeltje. Pp. xv + 621. R142.50. Lippincott-Raven. 1998. ISBN 0-7817-1595-4.

Novak's Textbook of Gynecology. 12th Edition. Jonathan S Berek. Pp. xxiv + 1 359. R550. Williams and Wilkins. 1996. ISBN 0-683-18114-9.

Health Professionals Abroad. By Tim Ryder. Pp. xxiv + 254. R108. Vacation Work. 1997. ISBN 1-85458-172-4.

* Book titles marked may be ordered directly from SA Medical Association Health and Medical Publishing Book Department, Private Bag X1, Pinelands, 7430, tel. (021) 531-3081, fax (021) 531-4126, e-mail multimedia@samedical.co.za or jstrydom@samedical.co.za

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.

Uveitis Today.* Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium on Uveitis, Yokohama, Japan, 10-14 October 1997. Excerpta Medica – International Congress Series 1158. Edited by S Ohno, K Aoki, M Usui and E Uchio. Pp. xii + 333. Illustrated. NLC290/US\$166.50. Elsevier Science BV. 1998. ISBN 0-444-82983-0.

Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality.* Second edition. Addendum to Volume 1: Recommendations. Pp. viii + 36. SwFr14/US\$12.60. WHO. 1998. ISBN 92-4-154514-3.

Pituitary Tumours. Epidemiology, Pathogenesis and Management. Edited by S M Webb. Pp. 251. BioScientifica Ltd. 1998. ISBN 1-901978-04-4.

Progress in Forensic Genetics 7.* Edited by Bjornar Olaisen, Bernd Brinkmann and Patrick J Lincoln. Pp. xx + 580. NLG425/US\$244. Elsevier Science BV. ISBN 0-444-82965-2.

New Balanced Anesthesia.* Edited by K Mori, A Ohmura, H Toyooka, Y Hatano, K Shingu and K Fukuda. Pp. xviii + 384. NLG320/US\$184. Elsevier Science BV. ISBN 0-444-50009-X.

1561