

Books

Doctor's Diary and Memoirs. Pond's Party, F Force, Thai-Burma Railway

By R. M. Mills. Pp 248. Illustrated. Aus\$35. New Lambton, NSW: RM Mills. 1994. ISBN 0-646-19473-9.

Having visited the JEATH Museum on the banks of the so-called 'River Kwaë' recently, this book was of particular interest. JEATH is an acronym made up of the initial letters of the countries involved in the building of the Burma-Thailand railway (Japan, England, Australia, Thailand).

The message which comes through is the indomitability of the human spirit and the flame of survival which burned bright in the soul of the author (and in many others).

The diary, which was found serendipitously, after being lost for many years, by a friend's daughter while cleaning out her father's study after his death, documents the horrific conditions under which the prisoners existed, yet through it all, the matter-of-fact narrative portrays an 'it wasn't so bad' feeling.

Descriptions of getting together with friends and co-PWs to have 'a few yarns' under the most dreadful circumstances, depict a heroism which is beyond the understanding of any of us who have not experienced such deprivations. The characterisation of the Changi prison as 'heaven' makes one appreciate the appalling conditions of places like Takunun and Taimonta, where the PWs were sent at various times.

Mills himself was terribly ill with malaria and the after-effects of a shrapnel wound, and was the only doctor treating over 700 Australian prisoners. Through starvation, disease, assaults and with the most ludicrously inadequate supplies and equipment, he attempted to treat the PWs

showing the most creative ingenuity. His fashioning of infusion needles out of bamboo, bedpans out of tree bark and drip lines out of anything he could lay his hands on, is testament to his unwillingness to give up under any circumstances.

His indefatigable spirit is never more strongly depicted than when, in the midst of a monsoon, with disease and death all around him, no news about how the war was progressing, and seemingly unending hopelessness, he plans what he will do when he gets home.

The men incarcerated with him were also heroic. No matter how hard they had worked during their 16-hour day, when volunteers were needed to tend the patients during a cholera outbreak, the men rallied and were ready to help. He had 35 cases in 24 hours, and stopped taking names of volunteers after 75. The seriously ill nursed the gravely ill. In recognition of this, the end of the book is devoted to reminiscences about some of the men who had been a source of pride for Mills, and who had provided him with badly needed assistance in his most brutal trials.

When he was released, suffering from tuberculosis, he was hospitalised for a long period, but subsequently managed to complete the requirements for the degree of Fellow of the Royal Australian College of Physicians. He was consumed by a sustained concern for the welfare of his erstwhile fellow-prisoners, and for five decades he has acted on their behalf, extracting maximum benefits for them from the authorities.

Many books have been written about this arena of the war, but none, I suggest, that will absorb medical readers more than this one. His accounts of the way he treated direly ill prisoners, and how he was devastated when he lost a patient, will bring home his dedication to his profession, and instil a feeling of pride in his readers, knowing that there is at least one doctor out there who cared — and cared deeply at that.

F. N. Sanders

Pathology of the Lung

Second Edition. Edited by William M. Thurlbeck and Andrew M. Churg. Pp. xii + 1151. Illustrated. DM348. Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1995. ISBN 3-13-665402-1.

Pathology of the Lung (2nd edition) is a well written excellent lung reference book for a busy general surgical practice handling pleural biopsies and lung resections. It is user friendly and the index is helpful.

The chapter on the neonatal lung is an excellent review of this topic, and extremely useful for general anatomical pathologists performing neonatal autopsy work. The illustrations are clear and well reproduced. The section on fetal vascular pathology is most informative.

The chapter on malignant mesotheliomas provides some thought provoking comments on their diagnosis. It points out the deficiencies in using electron microscopy as the 'gold standard' and reflects the Canadian viewpoint of the superiority of immunoperoxidase stains for this diagnosis. The immunoperoxidase data is up-to-date and helpful, and covers all the antibodies in use in our laboratory, as well as providing data on others.

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The chapter on tuberculosis includes the immunologic reactions found in individuals according to their immune status. It is well researched and is instructive even to pathologists seeing a large amount of tuberculosis on a daily basis. It is well laid out so that one can easily select a particular aspect about which one requires information. It provides a comprehensive list of causes of non-tuberculous mycobacteria.

This book would be a valuable asset to any busy general surgical pathology department or practice. A major competitor would be Corrin's *Lung Pathology* (Symmers Series), which reflects the British viewpoint. However, this book provides far greater detail on the topics covered, as well as abundant current immunoperoxidase data. It is not suitable as a 'pocket' reference book, being a weighty single volume book, and it will be out of the price range of small 'one man' pathology practices.

H. C. Wainwright

The Ethics of Animal and Human Experimentation

Edited by Peter P. De Deyn. Pp. xi + 358. £40. London: John Libbey. 1994. ISBN 0-86196-429-2.

This multi-author book consists of 29 chapters, written by physicians, philosophers, scientists, lawyers, statisticians and others. The authors are mostly Belgian and Dutch, but North American authors also contributed a few chapters.

Written in an essay style, it offers easy and pleasant reading.

Laws, rules, regulations, codes and guidelines pertaining to human and animal experimentation of many countries are discussed, with the emphasis on the situation in Belgium and the Netherlands. In South Africa, most medical researchers are probably familiar with the Institutional Review Board Guidebook of the National Institutes of Health in the USA and the local Medical Research Council's guidelines, which are partially based on the reports of the London Royal College of Physicians. This book now also provides a little insight into the European community's Good Clinical Practice guidelines which were indirectly promoted to a Directive from 1 January 1992 onwards (p. 189).

Research in animals is covered extensively, stressing the three R's, i.e. reduction, refinement and replacement. Considerable detail is provided about compulsory formal training courses in the Netherlands for caretakers, technicians and scientists who are involved in research in animals. A rather aggressive defence of animal experimentation is unfortunately not followed or preceded by the point of view of an animal rights group or individual.

There are extensive discussions on the ethical aspects of randomised clinical trials in humans, statistical planning and analysis, research on various vulnerable or captive groups, e.g. children, and there are separate chapters on the placebo, endoscopic techniques in surgery, exposure to toxic chemicals, anti-epileptic drugs, etc.

The tasks and functions of the committees responsible for ethical approval of research protocols in educational and research institutions are discussed. A Review Board of Research in General Practice in the Netherlands has now also been created (p. 267).

Throughout the book the most important ethical aspect of research in humans, i.e. informed consent, runs like a golden thread. It is discussed and stressed repeatedly. Repetitions in this type of book are probably unavoidable, and e.g. The Nuremberg Code and the Declaration(s) of Helsinki are frequently discussed.

The book is by no means a complete textbook on medical research ethics. Although sometimes mentioned briefly, notable omissions are epidemiological and reproductive research. AIDS also receives only scant attention.

Each chapter is followed by references, many of which are very recent.

The book can be highly recommended to everybody interested in human or animal research. It should be available in the libraries of all institutions where animal or human experimentation takes place.

M. P. Keet

Motor Development in Children

(Mariani Foundation Paediatric Neurology: 2). Edited by E. Fedrizzi, G. Avanzini and P. Crenna. Pp. vi + 179. Illustrated. £32. London: John Libbey. 1994. ISBN 0-86196-448-9.

Doctors who work with children should be familiar with the normal milestones of motor development. Those seeking a didactic manual on the subject will be disappointed in this book. Its appeal is likely to be limited to those with a deep interest in the ontogeny of neuromotor and oculomotor function in the neonate and young child.

Well produced in hard cover, the book sets out in 18 chapters the topics covered in a postgraduate course held in March 1993 at the Milan State University. The authors, headed by the world renowned Heinz Prechtl, are with four transatlantic exceptions all based in western Europe. Profound knowledge of neurodevelopmental physiology is clearly a common denominator among them.

Prechtl dismisses the time honoured concept of a set of primitive reflexes in the newborn infant. In its place he advances the idea of transient behaviour patterns which are age specific adaptations to the particular demands of early extrauterine life. Morphological and chemical maturations are interdependent and precisely scheduled so that a transient displacement of developmental sequences can lead through a cascade of events to derangement of cerebral function. This may manifest as impairment in the quality of movements in infancy rather than a decrease in their quantity. Supporting evidence for this hypothesis comes from studies of the development of reaching, grasping and fine manipulative ability in the first years of both normal and brain damaged children.

Further chapters examine in detail the acquisition of anticipatory control during the execution of complex movements, the maturation of feedback for the control of posture and gait, and the influence of visual cues on the development of head and neck control. The rest of the book is devoted to neurobiological models of vision, eye movements and the neural mechanisms which subserve effective visual function.

The volume deserves a place on the shelves of research libraries. It will be of interest to neurophysiologists and those who require structural explanations for the phenomena of normal infant and child development. The clinician will find little in it which has practical application.

P. M. Leary

Touch, Temperature, and Pain in Health and Disease: Mechanisms and Assessments

Progress in Pain research and Management Volume 3. Edited by Jörgen Boivie, Per Hansson and Ulf Lindblom. Illustrated. US\$69. Seattle: International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP PRESS). 1994. ISBN 0-931092-08-6.

In this, the decade of brain, progress in understanding neurological disorders has advanced in leaps and bounds, especially in the use of molecular techniques. However, our understanding of pain mechanisms and its management still remains in its infancy. This situation is certainly not due to lack of effort but illustrates the complexity of the subject.

This work comprises the proceedings of an international symposium held at the Wenner-Gren Centre, Stockholm, Sweden, in October 1993. Parts I and II, which deal with the psyche, psychophysics of pain and quantitative measurements of pain, highlight the difficulties faced with obtaining an objective assessment of pain severity and consequent degree of disability. Gunnar Borg gives an interesting overview of psychophysical scaling in chapter 2. Indeed, some of the systems developed to quantify touch, pressure, vibration and thermal cutaneous sensation are too

complex or laborious for everyday use. Interobserver variation further complicates sensory evaluation.

Using cause illustrations Hansson discusses the merit of bedside testing of sensation and quantitative sensory testing. I concur with his view that there still has to be 'further characterization of sensibility dysfunction in different pain states' before improved clinical management is possible.

The chapter on sensory dysfunction in post-herpetic neuralgia points out the possible multilevel generators of pain but brings us no closer as to how this might translate into better patient care. Causalgia and reflex sympathetic dystrophy is 'revisited' by Perl. The role, if any, of the sympathetic nervous system in this disorder has been seriously questioned by others. The last word on this controversy still has to be uttered.

Part IV discusses various models of sensory alteration and assessment using animals and humans. Part V deals with central processing mechanisms. In elegant PET studies, consistent responses are obtained in the anterior cingulate and prefrontal cortices, but no significant changes in the somatosensory cortex. These responses are thought to reflect mainly emotional and cognitive components of pain. Removal of the cingulate and prefrontal cortex does not interfere with pain localisation.

Apart from a few typographical errors, one cannot quibble about the layout and presentation of the book. It is reasonably priced and would be of value as a reference for the pain researcher. The busy clinician, however, is unlikely to refer to it except in very special situations.

A. I. Bhigjee

The Fight for Public Health. Principles & Practice of Media Advocacy*

By Simon Chapman and Deborah Lupton. Pp. xv + 258. Illustrated. £22. London: BMJ. 1994. ISBN 0-7279-0849-9.

Have you ever wondered why the media aren't interested in your preoccupations, despite their obvious public health importance? Now, find out why, in this fascinating account of how to make your health issue newsworthy.

Simon Chapman and Babara Lupton draw on a veritable wealth of experience in public health advocacy in Australia to explore how to engage the public media in promoting public health goals. Eminently readable, the book is grounded in detailed and rigorous research, and uses a multitude of vignettes and case studies to illustrate its arguments. In this way, it aims to offer a systematic, insightful and unambiguous approach to public health advocacy, which is largely lacking in traditional Masters of Public Health training.

The book's key premise is that all knowledge is socially produced and that reality is a socially constructed notion. Therefore, health advocates need to be able to frame public health issues in a manner consonant with how the media manufactures reality.

After illustrating these issues in two research studies and two case studies from Australia, a further chapter elaborates on the use of discourse analysis to tease out the sub-textual meanings present in the media's handling of health issues. The second half of the book goes on to give an A to Z of media advocacy — including such diverse topics as how to

give your *ad hoc* committee a news-friendly acronym, interviewing strategies and ploys to get your letter to the editor published.

An important message throughout is the need for practitioners to keep a grasp of the overall public health goals and not let the advocacy activity become an end in itself.

The book is ideally suited to practitioners of public health, to those interested in media analysis, particularly of health issues, and to the growing number of lobbyists and advocacy agents in South Africa today.

Policy makers would do well to read it as well as any health worker who has ever felt strongly about a health issue. At the price (not inconsiderable), it is well worth the buy, and a welcome addition to the growing body of literature identifying the important role of advocacy in health promotion. Its relevance to South Africa is considerable, particularly in its accounts of dealing with the tobacco industry.

L. London

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.

ABC of Sexually Transmitted Diseases.* Third edition. Edited by Michael W. Adler. Pp. 71. Illustrated. £15. London: BMJ Publishing Group. 1995. ISBN 0-7279-0889-8.

ABC of Rheumatology.* Edited by Michael L. Snaith. Pp. 90. Illustrated. £16. London: BMJ Publishing Group. 1996. ISBN 0-7279-0997-5.

ABC of Brainstem Death.* Second edition. By C. Pallis and D. H. Harley. Pp. 52. Illustrated. £13. London: BMJ Publishing Group. 1996. ISBN 0-7279-0245-8.

Introduction to Minimal Access Surgery.* Edited by T. H. Brown and M. H. Irving. Pp. 85. Illustrated. £32. London: BMJ Publishing Group. 1995. ISBN 0-7279-0885-5.

Otoscopy: A Structured Approach. By P. J. Wormald and G. G. Browning. Pp. vii + 93. Illustrated. £29.50. London: Arnold. 1996. ISBN 0-340-61376-9.

The Cholesterol Myth. The New Healthy Heart Programme.* By Robert Buist. Pp. 185. R39.99. Cape Town: Struik. 1995. ISBN 1-86825-909-9.

Tropical Disease Research. Progress 1975-94. Highlights 1993-94. Twelfth Programme Report UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research & Training in Tropical Diseases. Pp. v + 167. Illustrated. Sw.fr.26/US\$23.40. Geneva: WHO. 1995. ISBN 92-4-156179-3.

One World. The Health and Survival of the Human Species in the 21st Century. Edited by Robert Lanza. Pp. 300. US\$25. Sante Fe: Health Press. 1996. ISBN 0-929173-16-3.

Murder Magic and Medicine.* By John Mann. Pp. 227. Illustrated. R62.99. Oxford University Press. 1994. ISBN 0-19-855854-6.

Oxford Textbook of Palliative Medicine.* Edited by Derek Doyle, Geoffrey W. C. Hanks and Neil MacDonald. Pp. xv + 843. Illustrated. R806. Oxford University Press. 1993. ISBN 0-19-262028-2.

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