

Book Reviews/Boekbesprekings

Diabetes mellitus and obesity

Diabetes Mellitus and Obesity. Ed. by B. N. Brodoff and S. J. Bleicher. Pp. xvii + 816. Illustrated. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins. 1982.

This book has a rather misleading title since one may think that it addresses itself only to diabetes mellitus in relation to obesity. It is in fact a very comprehensive textbook covering all aspects of diabetes and carbohydrate metabolism, as well as obesity, and is divided into 4 sections. The 1st, on physiology and biochemistry, discusses basic concepts of normal nutrient metabolism and mechanisms of control by the hormones of the islets of Langerhans, in addition to which aspects of the disordered physiology occurring in diabetes and in obesity are discussed. Section 2 is on obesity but also includes a useful chapter on anorexia nervosa. Both clinical and experimental aspects of obesity are covered, as well as the important concept of obesity leading to insulin resistance. Sections 3 and 4 cover clinical diabetes and its socio-economic aspects.

This is an excellent textbook and although, as in all multi-authored textbooks, certain chapters are not as strong as others, it may be recommended for all physicians interested in diabetes mellitus and should be available in all medical libraries.

L. J. Klaff

Pharmacology

Basic and Clinical Pharmacology. Ed. by B. G. Katzung. Pp. 815. Illustrated. Los Altos, Calif.: Lange Medical Publishers. 1982.

The *Review of Medical Pharmacology* which appeared in 7 editions in the well-known Lange series has now been replaced by the new *Basic and Clinical Pharmacology*. This remains mostly in the capable hands of a team from San Francisco, but the entire book has been reconstructed to make it more useful to medical students and clinicians. There is less emphasis on the properties of individual drugs and more on their use in therapy, their effects (desired and adverse) and their interactions in the human body. The book is now easier to read and more attractive to the student. For example, the chapter on drugs that are abused is an interesting and balanced account of the subject, and the introduction to endocrine pharmacology and the chapter on drugs and the immune system are succinctly and clearly written. There is a particularly useful chapter on the management of the poisoned patient, and another on therapeutic and toxic potentials of over-the-counter agents. Two useful appendices deal with drug interactions and the effects of drugs on laboratory tests.

This book occupies an intermediate position between the comprehensive books of reference and the student guides, is up to date and will be of service to students and practitioners alike.

Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Tercentenary Congress — proceedings

Proceedings of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Tercentenary Congress 1981. Ed. by R. Passmore. Pp. xvi + 416. Illustrated. Edinburgh: Royal College of Physicians. 1982.

The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh was founded in 1681 at a time when the ancient kingdom was going through a long period of turmoil, of which Edinburgh had more than its share. Three hundred years later the College held elaborate celebrations which included reviews of the past, present and future. The *Proceedings of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Tercentenary Congress 1981* therefore covers a very wide field and contains matter of interest to a great many medical practitioners, especially those South Africans with an Edinburgh connection.

The initial collection of short papers has particular reference to the Kirk of Greyfriars and its churchyard, where so many of Edinburgh's most famous medical men lie buried. This is followed by what is probably the most interesting symposium in the book, that on the history of medicine. The most fascinating contribution is Antonia Fraser's paper on 'Charles II — the father of his people', an appropriate title for an article on Charles's diverse ventures into paternity. By 1681, when the College received a charter from him, he had acknowledged the paternity of 12 illegitimate children born to 7 women (it is a pity that the luscious Lucy Walters, one of his earlier loves, appears as Lucy Walker on page 28 and Lucy Walter on page 33). As Lady Antonia remarks: 'Very few people today who have in any way descended from the British peerage lack the blood of Charles II'. Other historical memoirs deal with the founder of the College, Sir Robert Sibbald, who achieved the feat of conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism and back again, and with the architecture and library of the College. The intimate association between Edinburgh and the first American medical school in Philadelphia is also emphasized, as is the abiding interest of the College in public health.

There is a symposium on medicine and pharmacy, another with the University of Leiden (mentor of Edinburgh medicine) on some present and future trends in medicine, one on current controversies in therapeutics, one on continuing postgraduate education, with contributions from Singapore, Hong Kong, India and Nigeria, and lastly one on the role of various colleges in the future. Yes, indeed, there is something for everyone, nicely presented and illustrated.

The physiology and medicine of diving

The Physiology and Medicine of Diving. 3rd ed. Ed. by P. B. Bennett and D. H. Elliott. Pp. x + 570. Illustrated. R91,85. London: Ballière Tindall. 1982.

Here is the 3rd edition of this excellent book which has had to be revised in the light of rapid advances in this field, many of which have been catalysed by the needs of underwater exploration for oil and minerals. As with aerospace medicine, human limitations are now becoming secondary to those of engineering in extending the range of underwater activities, and further advances will be closely linked to development of the necessary equipment. This book consists of 23 chapters each written by experts in their subject, and maintains a comfortable balance between the theoretical and the practical. Eight of the chapters are concerned with aspects of decompression, decompression sickness and its clinical management and other related topics, which is an indication of its importance to practical diving medicine. A particularly enjoyable chapter even for the non-specialist is the first one: 'A short history of man in the sea', which among other snippets of information tells us that Hephaestus (Rome's Vulcan) was thrown from Olympus into the sea because of his ugliness, built an underwater smithy, and may well be the god of submarine engineers, although possibly his main claim to fame was as the husband of Aphrodite. There are excellent chapters on clinical aspects of underwater medicine, and on the causes of underwater accidents and their management. References are copious and are listed at the end of each chapter, which because of their number is probably the most practical place for them. This book is a classic, and although its price may limit its appeal, should be read and kept for reference by all those concerned with hyperbaric physiology and the clinical care of divers.

Hormone therapy

Hormone Therapy (Clinics in Oncology, No. 1, vol. 1). Guest ed. by B. J. A. Furr. Pp. vii + 312. Illustrated. £10,75. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders. 1982.

This book is a new edition in this familiar and extensively read series from W. B. Saunders. The 1st volume covers the field of hormone therapy of tumours and includes contributions from a number of experts in the management of hormone-dependent tumours involving the breast, the endometrium, the lymphatic system, the prostate, and the pituitary and thyroid glands.

The extensive experimental background to the development of tumour treatment by hormones and the current state of knowledge of the mechanisms by which these drugs produce their effects, are well and concisely summarized. Separate chapters are devoted to the anti-androgens, anti-oestrogens and aromatase inhibitors. Of particular interest are the areas of controversy, which are clearly identified, and the possible lines of research which might assist in the resolution of these disagreements are specified.

The details of the treatment regimens are provided and the practical aspects of patient management emphasized. The consistency of style in the presentation of data achieved by the editor is truly remarkable. He is also responsible for an exciting chapter on the future prospects for hormonal therapy, and reference is made in this section to a host of new drugs which have shown promise in experimental trials but which have not yet been proven in clinical trials.

This book should appeal to a wide range of readers, from undergraduates seeking basic information to specialists concerned with the management of patients with hormone-dependent tumours.

M. Lange

Immunology and skin diseases

Immunology and Skin Diseases (Current Topics in Immunology Series, No. 15). By R. H. Cormane and S. S. Asghar. Pp. viii + 230. Illustrated. R41,50. London: Edward Arnold. 1981.

The dust-cover states that 'this book will be invaluable to clinical dermatologists concerned with diagnosis and treatment of skin disease'. Lest a prospective reader be misled, we must alert him to the fact that skin diseases are not granted overriding prominence, and also that there is virtually nothing to be found about treatment. The immunology of skin infections, and the dermatological effects of immunosuppression are also not covered. Instead, there is a survey of cell types and proteins of immunological importance, to each of which is attached a sequence of alterations reported to occur in non-infectious skin diseases, many of them not common. The reviewer came away with an impression of how hard it must be to write a successful book on this difficult subject. Nowadays the immune system is no longer studied as a defence against invasion, but for the internal mutinies which occur, in peace-time as it were, in the defence department.

G. H. Findlay

Anaesthetics

Lecture Notes on Anaesthetics. 3rd ed. By J. N. Lunn. Pp. vii + 182. Illustrated. £6,-. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific. 1982.

In this 2nd edition of a book aimed primarily at the medical student, the section on theories of anaesthetic action has been brought up to date, and aspects of postoperative care, including management of postoperative pain, have been introduced among other revisions. In the section on resuscitation more emphasis should have been placed on extension of the head and neck as a prerequisite to success in expired air resuscitation (EAR) in adults, while EAR in neonates is dismissed rather too summarily as it could be life-saving, particularly in the African or Third World context. The diagrams and charts are clear and easy to follow, and medical students should find this a very useful book, particularly if used in conjunction with sound practical demonstrations.