

REVIEWS OF BOOKS : BOEKRESENSIES

MEDICAL STATISTICS

Statistics of Therapeutic Trials. By G. Herdan, M.Sc., Ph.D., LL.D. Pp. 367 + xvi, with 80 illustrations. 50s. Amsterdam, Houston, London and New York: Elsevier Publishing Company for Cleaver-Hume Press Ltd. 1955.

Contents Part I Fundamental Principles. 1. The Concept of Therapeutical Statistics. 2. Nosographic Criteria for the Therapeutic Comparison. 3. The Concept of Clinical Controls—Statistical Design. 4. The Concept of Chance Control—Statistical Evaluation. 5. Sources of Error in Therapeutic Research. *Part II: Therapeutic Trials in Acute Diseases.* 6. The Outcome of the Disease as Criterion for the Therapeutic Comparison. 7. The Duration of the Disease as Criterion for the Therapeutic Comparison. 8. The Intensity of Specific Characteristics as Criterion for the Therapeutic Comparison. 9. Number and Severity of Complications as Criterion for the Therapeutic Comparison. 10. Pneumonias. 11. Poliomyelitis. 12. Scarlet Fever. 13. Diphtheria. 14. Typhoid Fever. 15. Pneumococcal Meningitis. 16. The Trend of the Disease before and after Treatment as Criterion for the Therapeutic Comparison. 17. Evaluation of Differences in the Trend of a Disease. 18. The Combination of a Number of Individual Chronic Cases. 19. The Comparison of Stationary Periods of the Disease. 20. The Quantitative Therapeutic Investigation. 21. Survival Rate after Treatment. 22. Radioactivity of Isotopes and Electrophoresis of Serum Proteins as Criteria for the Therapeutic Comparison. 23. Cancer. 24. Tuberculosis of the Lung. 25. Rheumatoid Arthritis. 26. Congestive Heart Failure. 27. Hypertension. 28. Diabetes. 29. Nephritis. References. Appendix.

There will be many in the medical profession who will congratulate the author in foregoing the conventional approach to medical statistics. In his book, the approach is primarily medical and an attempt is made to allocate to certain typical situations the statistical methods that are most suitable for dealing with them individually. After all, the medical research-worker's approach is from this angle. He has his problem, he wishes to plan his experiment and then to interpret his results. Which statistical technique should be used? On consulting the conventional statistical textbook he is confronted by a mass of mathematics and a number of statistical methods, and is soon at a loss to know which method is best suited for his purpose. He searches for examples. He meets rats and other biological material, fertilized plots or other agricultural examples, with which he has to compare the psychosomatic idiosyncrasies of man's reaction to disease. To the reviewer's knowledge, this is the only book published that overcomes this difficulty. Purely medical examples are used throughout.

At the same time the author has made every effort to keep the mathematics of the statistical techniques at their irreducible minimum, and they are introduced as the situation requires. This grants the clinician the opportunity to acquire a working

knowledge of the subject with less effort and in a shorter time than the conventional approach. The standard error test, chi square test, and correlation and regression, are the techniques expounded in this book. Those of us who believe in the importance of medical statistics will regret that space did not allow of the further exploitation of this commendable approach in the realms of analysis of variance and the somewhat more complex techniques of curvilinear and multiple regression. It is to be hoped that the author has the intention of reserving this for a second volume.

B.B.S.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

High Blood Pressure. By G. W. Pickering, M.A., M.B. (Cantab.), M.D. (Ghent), F.R.C.P. Pp. 547 + viii, with 106 illustrations. 65s. London: J. and A. Churchill Ltd. 1955.

Contents: 1. Introduction. 2. Measurement of Arterial Pressure in Man. 3. Diurnal Variations in Arterial Pressure. The Immediate Responses to Environmental Changes. 4. Physiological Aspects of Arterial Pressure. 5. Experimental Hypertension. 6. The Classification of Hypertension. 7. The Circulation in Essential Hypertension. 8. The Arterial Pressure. 9. The Role of Inheritance in Essential Hypertension. 10. The Role of Environmental Factors in the Genesis of Essential Hypertension. 11. Arterial Changes in High Blood Pressure. 12. Essential Hypertension. Concept and Clinical Features. 13. The Benign and Malignant Phases of Hypertension. 14. Prognosis of Essential Hypertension. 15. The Treatment of Hypertension. 16. Nephritis and Nephrosis. 17. Pylonephritis. 18. Miscellaneous Conditions Associated with High Blood Pressure. 19. Polyarteritis Nodosa. 20. Coarctation of the Aorta. 23. Hypertension and Pregnancy. 24. Practical Points in the Diagnosis and Management of Patients with High Blood Pressure. Appendix—Calculation of Age and Sex-Adjusted Score. Bibliography.

Here is an authoritative reference on one of the most important yet most controversial subjects in medicine, a condition high up in the list of principal causes of death, a condition of prime importance with regard to life insurance and a condition over which we now have drugs to exercise control. This book is not merely a rehash of previous text-books on high blood-pressure. It is a graphic account of the lifetime's work of a man who has become renowned for his capacity for original observation and thought, and a man well practised in the experimental, physiological and clinical branches of this subject. Punctuated by his characteristic wit, the style in which the book is written bears the stamp of his earlier days as a classical scholar, yet the contents represent the practical approach of a scientist actively engaged in clinical medicine; indeed a rare combination.

There is much in the book to interest many readers. The first half will interest the physiologist, experimentalist and pathologist, and the medical practitioner engaged in insurance work. Here the difficult distinction between normal and abnormal is well emphasized and such controversial problems as the role of inheritance, the rise in blood pressure with age, the relationship to atherosclerosis, the association with obesity, and the bearing of arm circumference, have been discussed and illustrated by experiment. Included are tables that make the correction of the blood pressure for age, sex and arm circumference an exceedingly simple matter.

The latter half will be of more interest to clinicians, for it deals with clinical states frequently associated with elevation of the blood pressure; the chapter on phaeochromocytoma being most instructive. In the latter half, practitioners will enjoy the simple practical manner with which the management of a patient with high blood-pressure is treated—a state of affairs often of great concern to some practitioners and, if mismanaged, of dire consequence to the patient. It is this section however, that will need frequent revision with the rapid advance in therapy that is taking place today.

To one who has seen this book in preparation and has seen the meticulous care with which each chapter was produced, the extremely high standard of the final product is no surprise.

B.B.S.

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

South African Journal of Laboratory and Clinical Science. It is now just over a year since the *South African Journal of Laboratory and Clinical Medicine* came into being as a successor to *Clinical Proceedings*. *Clinical Proceedings* was started by the Postgraduate Association in Cape Town, and when that body eventually ceased to function, the Journal Committee of the Association decided to continue the publication, but under a new name.

The *South African Medical Journal* is one of particular general interest and has a wide appeal, but there is a definite need for another Journal, with a more limited appeal, insofar that it concentrates on the original work of the medical men of South Africa, and its choice of articles are naturally more technical in detail and direction. The *South African Medical Journal* with its wider appeal to the general reader, cannot hope to encompass and to embrace the more technical aspects of the individual specialties, but the *Journal of Laboratory and Clinical Medicine* has continued to act as a forum for the reception of such work until the individual specialties in South Africa obtain or develop Journals of their own.

At present, the *Journal of Laboratory and Clinical Medicine* undoubtedly fills this need. It is well edited, ably produced and its Editorial Board contains distinguished members of the Medical Association, the South African Institute of Medical Research, each of the Universities and the Union Health Department. They are to be congratulated on their work in the production of this Journal which so ably keeps pace with the advancing fields of Medicine in South Africa. While its circulation at present is not as wide as one would wish, the interest and importance of its contributory articles in the last year have been a source of inspiration to many. As time goes on, this Journal will most probably increase in size, since more original work is being done in South Africa, and the increase in range of its contributions mark it as a Journal of growing importance of the medical life of this country.

T. B. McM.

MEDICAL ANNUAL

The Medical Annual. A Year Book of Treatment and Practitioners' Index. Edited by Sir Henry Tidy, K.B.E., M.A., M.D. (Oxon), F.R.C.P. and R. Milnes Walker, M.S. (Lond.), F.R.C.S. Pp. 548 + xlv with illustrations and plates. Bristol: John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1955.

Contents: 1. Introduction by the Editors. 2. Review of the Year's Work. 3. The Practitioners' Index: Recent Pharmaceutical and Dietetic Preparations, Medical and Surgical Appliances, etc. 4. Books of the Year. General Index.

Those who like their annual 'home refresher course' will once again welcome this 1955 edition of an old and trusted friend. Its

arrival is an annual reminder (like one's birthday) that one is older (and we hope wiser) and that medicine advances in a similar fashion. There are other annuals for sale which fulfil a somewhat similar function; each reader must select the one he likes best. The fact that the medical annual is in its 73rd year shows that it certainly commands a faithful following—and rightly so. For it covers much of the world's (and especially the British) literature in its review of the years work and there can be little of topical interest to the practitioner which is not to be found in its pages. Instead of reviewing any individual paper *in extenso* the editors have selected a notable list of contributors, each of whom has written and edited one or more sections of the book. In the main, under each heading, they have concentrated on writing a critical review and have not hesitated to express their own opinions as well. There are in effect a number of 'essays' each of which presents modern concepts of a subject in a readable and authoritative manner.

The articles reviewed appear in alphabetical order and it is rather startling to jump from ganglion to gastric ulcer and from hernia to herpes simplex. Medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology and all the specialties are mixed in this medical pie; the book is aimed at the general practitioner, who perforce requires to know more and more about all subjects. But even specialists in a particular field will find something to interest them, though they must not expect the concentration that is only to be found in a book entirely devoted to a single specialty.

The practitioner's index at the end of the book will help practitioners to master some of the trade names for recently marketed drugs—and in these days an index like this is becoming more and more necessary. One is rather appalled to notice that this section alone occupies 22 pages of small print.

All in all, the mixture as before—and just as welcome.

C.M.

SKIN DISEASES

Systemic Associations and Treatment of Skin Diseases. By Kurt Wiener, M.D. Pp. 556 with illustrations. £7 4s. 6d. St. Louis: The C. V. Mosby. 1955.

Contents: Part I. Systemic Associations of Skin Diseases. 1. Lupus Erythematosus, Cutaneous (Discoid) Form. 2. Systemic Lupus Erythematosus. 3. Scleroderma. 4. Dermatomyositis (Polymyositis). 5. Erythema Exudativum Multiforme (Hebra). 6. Erythema Nodosum. 7. Acne Vulgaris. 8. Rosacea. 9. Eczema—Atopic Eczema. 10. Eczema—Contact Eczema. 11. Eczema (not specified). 12. Eczema (not specified) and Nutrition. 13. Eczema—Systemic Therapy. 14. Erythroderma Exfoliativum (Dermatitis Exfoliativa). 15. Urticaria. 16. Urticaria. 17. Pruritus. 18. Psoriasis. 19. Psoriasis. 20. Parapsoriasis and Acrodermatitis Chronica Atrophicans. 21. Lichen Planus. 22. Pemphigus Vulgaris. 23. Pemphigus—continued. 24. Dermatitis Herpetiformis (Dühring's Disease). 25. Herpes Zoster, Shingles. 26. Acanthosis Nigricans. Light Dermatoses and Porphyria, Lipoidosis, Pyoderma. 27. Diseases of the Sweat Apparatus, Pruritus and Kraurosis Vulvae. Keratosis, Pseudoepithelioma Elasticum. 28. Hair Diseases, Vitiligo. *Part II: Systemic Treatment of Skin Diseases.* 29. ACTH (Adrenocorticotrophic Hormone), Cortisone, Hydrocortisone. 30. Hormones and Organ Extracts. 31. Antibiotics. 32. Sulfonamides. 33. Antihistaminic Agents. 34. Metals. 35. Metals. 36. BAL (British Anti-Lewisite, Dimercaprol). 37. Autonomic Drugs—Miscellaneous. 38. Quinine Group. 39. Vitamins—Miscellaneous. 40. Vitamin D₂ (Calciferol) and the Systemic Therapy of Skin Tuberculosis. 41. Nonspecific Agents: Vaccines. 42. Diets. 43. Spinal Roentgen Therapy; Sympathetic Surgery. 44. Spa Therapy of Skin Diseases; Unorthodox Methods.

This book is a companion to the author's earlier work *Skin Manifestations of Internal Disorders*. Its scope is indicated in the list of contents shown above and it consists largely of a review of the literature with little intrusion of the author's own views. Although nearly 3,000 articles or excerpts from the literature have been consulted the choice does not seem to have been very critical and much available important work has been missed. Urticaria pigmentosa is dismissed in less than half a page without reference to malignant mastocytosis; no mention is made of the role of insects in the cause of urticaria papulosa; pseudoepithelioma elasticum is covered in 2 pages and Touraine's work is ignored. It is stated that in acute (intermittent) porphyria no skin manifestations other than chloasmatic and diffuse pigmentations are known; and the ocular lesions in porphyria, described by Boshoff and Barnes, are not noted. The chapter on parapsoriasis would have been very much better if it had been based on Civatte's work.

There is little in this book which cannot be found in any good text-book of dermatology.

J.M.