

REVIEWS OF BOOKS : BOEKRESENSIES

MEDICAL OFFICE PROCEDURES

Office Procedures. By Paul Williamson, M.D. Pp. 412+ix with illustrations. £5 6s. 3d. Philadelphia & London: W. B. Saunders Company. 1955.

Contents: 1. Ear, Nose and Throat. 2. Eye. 3. Musculo-skeletal System. 4. Gynecology. 5. Obstetrics. 6. Urology. 7. Proctology. 8. Pediatrics. 9. Minor Surgery. 10. Internal Medicine. 11. Psychological Testing. 12. Anesthesia. 13. Physiotherapy. 14. The Small Laboratory. 15. Roentgenography.

In this reviewer's opinion the title of this book of more than 400 pages is not quite accurate—it belies its contents. The nature of the procedures described, more often than not, cannot be undertaken in an ordinary surgery. As a rule one simply has not the time and the proper facilities needed. They are more likely to be found in a small, staffed and well-equipped clinic. The author seems to rely chiefly on the use of local anaesthesia for the accomplishment of most of his 'minor' procedures, which might rather be classed in

the 'major' category! Appendicectomy is a case in point, and there are many others in the book.

True, we doctors are assumed to know how to carry out minor office procedures. These are many and varied in nature, depending most often on the individual practitioner's knowledge and aptitude, and in acquiring them the 'hard way' has often been the best teacher. Few of us can benefit fully from other people's experience without ourselves 'trying it out' first. In general practice, one invents useful aids and short cuts, especially when one has to dispense with assistants and expensive instruments. It is at such times, that one experiences the truth of Wordsworth's words, 'Man needs but little here below....'

This book would be a veritable *vade mecum* to doctors in out-lying clinics. It gives much sound advice and many a timely warning. In the section on the Musculo-skeletal System the author makes the point, all too easily forgotten in our days, that 'every back that hurts is not a ruptured disc'. He might have added, '*nor is it a displaced vertebra*'—a very easy, very tall, and more often than

not erroneous, diagnosis, and one which is expensive to the patient. Moreover, throughout the book the author warns his readers that certain conditions should not be undertaken outside a hospital.

The whole section on Minor Surgery is excellent, as well as the one on the Musculo-skeletal System. Those on Proctology and Urology are somewhat too concise but very helpful.

The author discusses sinus trouble at some length, but does not seem to refer to the more common and more troublesome condition of frontal neuritis; similarly subdeltoid bursitis is discussed, but rheumatic affection of the shoulder musculature has been overlooked, a condition which is much more common in everyday practice. The treatment described for 'baseball finger', and the illustration accompanying it, seem to be incorrect; hyperextension and not flexion seems indicated. On page 64 directions for blocking the brachial plexus tell one to direct the needle point toward the fourth lumbar instead of, presumably, thoracic vertebra. In the section on Obstetrics, reference is made only to the Aschheim-Zondek and the Friedman tests for pregnancy but not to the frog test. These are, however, minor points.

The work as a whole is excellently presented; the sketches are simple and clear and appear in great profusion throughout the text. They are so placed as to form an integral part of the text itself. This combination of text and illustrations is so far the best that one has come across. The printers have certainly done a good job, too.

This work should prove to be a real help to anyone starting a practice, as well as to house surgeons.

G.C.A.v.d.W.

MODERN OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY

Modern Trends in Obstetrics and Gynaecology (Second Series). Edited by Kenneth Bowes, M.D., M.S. (Lond.), M.B., Ch.B. (L'pool), F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G. Pp. 407+xv with 170 illustrations. 67s. 9d. London: Butterworth & Co. (Publishers), Ltd. South African Office—Butterworth & Co. (Africa) Limited, Durban. 1955.

Contents: 1. The Development and Shape of the Female Pelvis. 2. The Mechanism of Myometrial Function and its Disorders. 3. The Cellular Components of the Human Ovary. 4. The Ovarian Vasculature and Ovarian Functions. 5. Ovulation About the Time of the Menopause. 6. The Influence of Oestrogens on the Formation of Uterine Tumours. 7. The Sex Chromatin and its Application to Errors in Sex Development. 8. Pain in Gynaecological Conditions. 9. The Metabolic Changes Associated with Operation. 10. The Pathology of Anuria in Obstetrics. 11. A Hypothesis of the Aetiology of Toxaemia of Late Pregnancy. 12. The

Circulation in Pregnancy and Toxaemia of Pregnancy. 13. Aspects of the Reproductive Physiology of the Post-Partum Period. 14. Maternal Obesity. 15. The Forceps Operation in Modern Obstetrics. 16. Acute Abdominal Conditions in Pregnancy and Puerperium. 17. The Establishment and Maintenance of Respiration in the Newborn. 18. The Early Diagnosis of Intersex. 19. Emergency Surgery of the Newborn. 20. Radiology in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. 21. The Post-Menopausal Endometrium. 22. Rare Conditions Associated with Amenorrhoea. 23. Antibiotics in the Treatment of Genital Tuberculosis in the Female. 24. Premenstrual Tension. 25. The Treatment of Carcinoma of the Cervix Uteri. 26. Vulval Atrophy and Leukoplakia. Index.

The second series of 'Modern Trends' is not another edition of the first book—the contents are wholly different—but should be regarded as being supplementary to the first series.

For the first time South Africa has contributors in this series, viz. Professor O. S. Heyns (The development and shape of the female pelvis) and Professor Ian Donald, now of Glasgow, (The establishment and maintenance of respiration in the newborn). These articles illustrate the wisdom of policy of getting experts to present their views on parts of their specialities in which they are particularly interested.

In reviewing this book one is immediately struck by the widening scope of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. In particular the range of Endocrinology is particularly brought out; no fewer than 18 out of the 26 chapters have an endocrinological basis.

The little-known subject of the ovarian vasculature and its influence in the production of pathological changes in the ovary, is well documented by Reynolds. The contentious issue of oestrogens and uterine neoplasia is well handled by the late Harold Burrows. Barr writes on his method for determining the chromosomal sex of an individual. The importance of this determination in every case presenting with primary amenorrhoea should be realized. Theobald writes a stimulating chapter on pain in gynaecological conditions, and Sheehan's article on anuria should help in elucidating this problem. Mastboom's hypothesis on the aetiology of the toxaeemias of late pregnancy is a masterpiece. Bishop writes on rare conditions associated with amenorrhoea. It is a pity that the term 'gonadal dysgenesis' is not substituted for the less satisfactory one 'ovarian agenesis'. After all, most of these cases are really males. It is gratifying to see that the ovarian hyperthecosis syndrome has at last found its way into an English textbook on Gynaecology. It is certainly not so rare as the author supposes. Ryden, after extensive experience with the problem of genital tuberculosis, gives his views on the modern treatment of the condition. Wallace makes a plea for the abolition of the word 'kraurosis' and suggests the commendable term 'primary atrophy of the vulva'.

This second series is an excellent book and it should be as well received as its predecessor.

W.H.M.