

PLANNING OF STATISTICAL SURVEYS

Medical Surveys and Clinical Trials. Edited by L. J. Witts, C.B.E., M.A., M.D., Sc.D., F.R.C.P. Pp. x + 328. Illustrations. English price 35s. London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press. 1959.

In therapeutic trials in which controls are used, significantly fewer treatments are considered to be successful than when no controls are used (page 111). War on 'clinical impression' and in my experience'. The British teaching hospital system has largely fostered *ex cathedra* announcements by all-knowing chiefs, yet caution has slowly spread, perhaps down from the north, and it is in keeping with the British personality that systems of exact analysis of therapeutic methods should emanate from Britain.

This book really tells you about ways of conducting surveys of prevalence and incidence, and therapeutic trials which require the statistical method. Before anyone decides to embark on a piece of work to establish the relationship of fleabites to peptic ulcer, the incidence of jaundice in railway workers, or the value of extracts of rhinoceros urine in asthma, he should consult this book. For example, he may not realize that, by correct design, in a factorial type of experiment, the importance and interaction of several different factors may be examined in the same trial. This is in contrast to the old method of varying only one factor at a time. Or again, by sequential analysis a study may end as soon as a significant result is achieved, in contrast to the conventional plan of studying a set number of subjects with final assessment of results.

In places, the ordinary clinician who is interested in truth will find the language a little obscure and even verbose. He will find very little here on methods of using patients as their own controls (e.g. in assessing the value of 'tablets' in the treatment of diabetes). There is one further criticism; the statistical result is not necessarily the whole answer. The British are perhaps becoming too prone now to accept it as such. Thus, a carefully-conducted M.R.C. trial of corticosteroids in exophthalmos found these to be of no real value, but what they really found was that in the dosage they adopted, and in the type of patients in their study, no statistical advantage could be shown.

Anyhow, this book is most necessary.

W.P.U.J.

RADIOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUE

Medical Radiographic Technique. 2nd edition. Prepared by Technical Service X-ray Department, General Electric Company, under the original editorial supervision of the late G. W. Files. Pp. 386. Illustrations. 82s. 6d. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1959.

This book supplies the needs of radiographers working for a diploma. It embraces physics and electrotechnics as applied to X-ray equipment and includes sections on anatomy and clinical radiography. That it originated in notes intended for technicians of the General Electric Corporation is quite clear, since the treatment of electrotechnics and the physics of radiation is extremely good. Chapters on tomography, high-kilovoltage radiography, soft-tissue radiography and photofluorography are also very well

done. Dark-room lay-out and procedure are included, but unfortunately there is no discussion of silver recovery processes.

The anatomy section is well illustrated and the text fairly complete. It is in the field of clinical radiography that the book is perhaps a little weaker. Examination candidates will expect more than the routine views illustrated. There is not the completeness expected of a work of reference or of a text-book and there are also surprising omissions, such as dental radiography and foreign-body localization as applied to the eye. Many of the procedures with contrast media are very cursorily described, perhaps because a radiologist usually supervises the examination. On the other hand, radiographers will be grateful for the excellent discussion on diaphragms and grids, stereoscopes, etc.

Radiologists who are candidates for a diploma will also appreciate this book. Practising radiologists will refer to it in order to understand what the X-ray service man is trying to explain to them.

The standard of book production is extremely high. L.W.

VIRAL AND RICKETTSIAL INFECTIONS

Viral and Rickettsial Infections of Man. 3rd edition. Edited by Thomas M. Rivers, M.D. and Frank L. Horsfall, Jr., M.D. Pp. xviii + 967. 134 illustrations. 63s. net. London: Pitman Medical Publishing Co. Ltd. 1959.

It is 6 years since the 2nd edition appeared. The knowledge of viral and rickettsial infections has advanced to such a degree during this time that the book has had to be rewritten for the 3rd edition. This has been done with the help of additional eminent contributors, who now total 44. Each has been chosen as being an authority in his particular field.

It has been necessary to rearrange the material and introduce additional chapters. The growing importance of biochemistry and biophysics is emphasized. There are new chapters on the recently discovered ECHO viruses and adenoviruses, and also on the arthropod-borne animal viruses and their infection of man.

The recently recognized entity of haemorrhagic fever is covered in a new chapter.

Various aspects of poliomyelitis are now dealt with in 3 chapters instead of one.

As previously, all aspects of viral and rickettsial infections are covered, and the book will continue to have wide appeal. This will, no doubt, be aided by its subsidized price. W.B.B.

PAEDIATRIC ELECTROCARDIOGRAPHY

Pädiatrischer EKG-Atlas. Von Priv.-Doz. Dr. W. Heck und Dr. J. Stoermer. Pp. xvi + 230. 181 Abbildungen in 228 Einzeldarstellungen und eine Messtafel zur Bestimmung des Vektors und zur Ausmessung der Herzfrequenz. Ganzleinen DM 78.00. Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1959.

With the recent advances in cardiac surgery, early and exact diagnosis of congenital heart disease is more important than ever. In this, electrocardiography, being technically simple and completely safe, has its undisputed place. In judging the abnormal,

however, a knowledge of the normal is required. The book under review fills a gap in this respect.

After a short introduction, in which the peculiarities of the ECG in infancy and childhood are set out, vectorcardiography, intrinsic deflection, the electrical axis, and the anatomical differences of the heart and thorax in infancy and their influence on the ECG, are shortly but clearly explained.

In the main chapter of the book, which fills the abovementioned gap and presents an important contribution, minimal, mean and maximal normal time values are given for every deflection of the graph, and times for the following age-groups: Premature babies, 1st and 2nd months, 3-5 months, 6-12 months, 2-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-10 years and 11-15 years. The times given for each group represent the average of 50 clinically healthy individuals completely examined.

In the atlas part of the book will be found typical abnormal ECGs of most of the more important clinical conditions where they are found, including the ECGs of all congenital heart diseases, and also short anamnestic notes and collateral examinations. All findings are confirmed by operation or autopsy.

The book is beautifully printed and certainly of great value—if only for comparison or reference—to the non-German paediatrician specializing in cardiology.

W.G.H.

TISSUE TRANSPLANTATION

Transplantation of Tissues. Vol. 2. Skin, Cornea, Fat, Nerves, Teeth, Blood Vessels, Endocrine Glands, Organs, Peritoneum, Cancer Cells. Edited by Lyndon A. Peck, M.D. et al. Pp.

xiii + 690. 252 figures. \$20.00 and 160s. Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company. London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox Ltd. 1959.

The first volume of *Transplantation of Tissues* was published in 1955, and was enthusiastically received. This volume, though similarly patterned, deals with a wide variety of transplants and is therefore of necessity a group presentation. Each subject is dealt with by a specialist in his particular field, which ensures the most up-to-date and authoritative treatment of each section.

The contributors describe, in the simplest of terms, how tissues, organs or glands may be grafted, and the success, limitations or failure of the procedures. Though possibly regarded by many general practitioners as somewhat impractical, this subject is shown to be the exact opposite in these valuable contributions, which arise from present-day studies of cell behaviour. One of the most recently developed branches of medicine, this is also one of the most interesting and topical.

In this volume, experimental research on animals and the clinical application to humans is separate. The book is profusely illustrated, both by photographs and diagrams, in excellent plates of great clarity. Each chapter is concluded with a bibliography.

The purpose of this book is to acquaint the uninitiated with the essentials of the transplantation of tissues, and this is ably achieved with just the right modicum of specialized technical terms. Both volume 1 and volume 2 will be a valuable addition to the book shelves of any medical practitioner, and a source of more and more frequent reference as this field of medicine receives wider and more general acceptance and application.

C.N.B.