

Book Reviews : Boekbesprekings

PLASTIESE CHIRURGIE

Monographs on Plastic Surgery. Vol. 1. The Use of Skin Grafts. Deur R. C. Bell, M.B., F.R.C.S. Bl. 157. Geïllustreer. R11.15. Londen en Kaapstad: Oxford University Press. 1973.

Hierdie boek is skynbaar een van 'n series in plastiese chirurgie wat bedoel is om die onderwerp te verduidelik aan die chirurg wat slegs met tussenposes 'n plastiese operasie moet uitvoer.

Die skrywer probeer die onderwerp so eenvoudig as moontlik aan die chirurg verduidelik. Die probleem is egter dat die skrywer dit so vereenvoudig dat 'n baie ingewikkelde operasie maklik voorkom. 'n Voorbeeld hiervan is waar die herstel van hypospadie beskryf word. Hierdie tipe boek kan daartoe lei dat enige chirurg dus sodanige operasies wil onderneem, wat net tot groot probleme mag lei. Hierdie boek kan dus beswaarlik aanbeveel word aan die algemene chirurg en ortopediese chirurg vir wie dit spesifiek geskrywe was.

Daar bestaan boeke wat die onderwerp meer duidelik dek en veral meer op die moontlike komplikasies van die verskillende operasies ingaan.

J.A.E.

TROPICAL NEUROLOGY

Tropical Neurology. Ed. by J. D. Spillane, M.D., F.R.C.P. Pp. xv + 448. Illustrated. R17.00. London and Cape Town: Oxford University Press. 1973.

This is a splendid book that gives a fascinating picture of the pattern of neurological disease in Africa, the East and South America. Spillane's introduction is masterly in its presentation, emphasis and readability.

Most of the contributors not only give the neurological facts lucidly and honestly, but preface them with a brief description of the economic, climatic and cultural factors that determine when and how people present as patients. A notable exception is Rachman's account of neurological disorders in Rhodesia which has been carelessly put together. It

is clear that tropical neurologists have to contend with a host of difficulties — the difficulty of history-taking, the unsophisticated concept of disease and the paucity of special services and autopsy material. It is remarkable that they have achieved so much by painstaking clinical observation.

This book is not only a contribution to neurological knowledge but an experience that makes one wonder about priorities in medicine.

F.A.

PSYCHIATRIC OUTPATIENTS

The Psychiatric Outpatient. Clinical and organisational aspects. By L. Gillis, M.D., D.P.M., F.R.C. Psych. and S. Egert, B.A. (Admin.), Diploma in Mental Health (L.S.E.). Pp. 131. £2.40. London: Faber and Faber. 1973. Available through MacMillan South Africa (Publishers), Joubert Park, Tvl.

This little book is much more important than its modest proportions would lead one to suspect. It represents a serious, well-thought-out and well-documented study of conditions at the Groote Schuur Hospital's Psychiatric Outpatient Department in 1968; and an attempt to point the way to overcoming the difficulties and shortcomings disclosed by the investigation — and these were many and varied. Some findings are well known, such as the snag of the patient having to wait for hours before being seen — and the authors' way of dealing with this has proved sufficiently effective to be adapted elsewhere. Some of the other findings are much more unusual — some of them even astonishing: such as the discovery that only 22% of the patients attending had ever been asked about their emotional problems! Or the reasons why some patients became 'chronic attenders' at the clinics. Highly interesting, too, are the patients' expectations of what the psychiatrist would do.

This is a valuable and stimulating piece of research and a *must* for study by anyone at all connected with a psychiatric outpatient department.

H.R.