

BOOK REVIEWS

Practical Occupational Medicine. A Seaton, R Agius, E McCloy and D D'Auria. Edward Arnold, 1994. Pp v + 277. £24.95. Illustrated. ISBN No: 0-340-55936-5.

In the preface to this concise paperback the authors averred that they would be well satisfied if they conveyed some of their own enthusiasm for the speciality which crosses traditional medical boundaries into other scientific fields and the World of Industry. They have succeeded in this.

The book is well printed and excellently laid out: it has a useful index and a particularly valuable chapter on Sources of Information.

It is clinically based, with numerous case histories reminiscent of the approach used in Donald Hunter's classic text book "The Diseases of Occupations". This is particularly suitable for what is essentially a primer, and which is naturally complementary to further studies in internal medicine, general practice, occupational or public health medicine.

The application to military medicine is clear: it reiterates the need for the essential question "what is your job". The serviceman or woman is exposed to every conceivable occupational and environmental hazard. The appellation Sapper or Guardsman is not nearly sufficient for the medical officer to weigh this essential factor, and further inquiry must very often be made. This of course underlines the need for RAMC personnel to understand much about the Army, its organisation, environment and tasks.

The first chapter epitomises the practical approach by starting the two basic concepts of occupational (or military) medical practice.

These are the effects of work (on military activity) or health, and the effect of health or work (or military activity). Both have been a vital influence on all campaigns, with literally innumerable examples of their decisive effect. Two of the most celebrated are the anti scurvy regimes of the Royal Navy in the 18th century, and General Bill Slim's defeat of malaria, and hence the Japanese, in India and Burma in World World 2.

This book is clearly limited by its size, and it cannot be expected to be comprehensive in alluding to all possible risks. For example, the admirable short section on thermal hazards has clear military applications, but does not mention frostbite.

In conclusion I unreservedly recommend this book as essential reading for an aspirant specialist in either Occupational Medicine or Public Health Medicine, and as a very useful initial reference for all military doctors, of whatever discipline.

P J BLACKBURN

ABC of Clinical Genetics. 2nd Edn. HM Kingston. BMJ Publishing Group, 1994. Pp 75. £13.95. Illustrated. ISBN No: 0-7279-0846-4.

Many of the ABC booklet series provide the simple basics of their subject and are useful as introductory and refresher reading. This edition of the ABC of Clinical Genetics goes further. It provides clear information on practically all of the conditions likely to be encountered by doctors in clinical practice. Indications for, and methods of investigations to be undertaken in genetic disorders, are clearly stated and are a significant guide to paediatricians, obstetricians and general practitioners.

The opening chapters deal with general considerations, including the basics of drawing a pedigree, estimation of risks, specialist genetic services which are (and should be) available, Mendelian inheritance and non-Mendelian mechanisms. Mutations, imprinting (which latter has caused this reader some difficulty in the past) and the types of mosaicism are all explained with clarity. The difference between nuclear DNA and mitochondrial DNA also gets a mention. The chapter on special issues which includes the problems of consanguinity, definition of degree of genetic relationships with reference to cousin marriages and first cousins once removed, second cousins etc is very helpful in correcting misconceptions which parents or prospective parents often have in this sphere. The essentials of screening for genetic disorders and carrier status are succinctly stated.

A number of common chromosomal disorders are described together with details of chromosomal analysis. Chapters on the genetics of some common disorders, cancer, teratogenesis and pre-natal diagnosis have been included with information on such techniques as pre-implantation embryo biopsy. There is a brief description of possible future treatments of genetic disorder by gene therapy.

The inclusion of chapters on gene structure and techniques of DNA analysis are welcome as they provide the clinician with some idea of what genetic laboratories about about, and a guide to the precise investigation to be requested. Reference to the molecular genetics of Huntington's chorea, Duchenne and Becker muscular dystrophies is very helpful in understanding the clinical variations and problems of counselling in these conditions.

The book concludes with a useful glossary which includes more recent terminology introduced as genetics has developed.

This little book is a worthwhile acquisition and an essential guide for general paediatricians and obstetricians.

JR MARSHALL

Stress Survival Guide. C Grainger. BMJ Publishing Group, 1994. Pp 54. £6.95 UK. Illustrated. ISBN No: 0-7279-0879-0.

This book is written by a Senior Registrar in Public Health Medicine for newly qualified doctors and medical students. It is inspired by a similar book published for trainees in clinical psychology and refers to other sources including 'Living with Stress' (by Cooper CL, Cooper RD, Eaker CH).

It is a very practical guide to recognizing stress and managing it. It takes a problem solving approach, discussing the real difficulties that are specific to medicine and sensibly challenges some of the prevailing attitudes within the profession. It gives good sound advice about time management, relaxation and saying 'No'. It is very short and can be read quickly and easily and gives a useful list of sources of help. The book was initially prepared by the West Midlands Post Graduate Board of Medical and Dental Education and distributed to all their house officers.

This is to be commended and perhaps other employing authorities should think about doing the same.

By recognising and managing stress in their own lives doctors will be in a much better position to help their patients do the same. Although written for medical students and young doctors, a number of older doctors will find this book valuable too.

AB GILLHAM

The Fight for Public Health – Principles and Practice of Media Advocacy. S Chapman and D Lupton. BMJ Publishing Group, 1994. Pp ix + 270. UK £19.95. ISBN No: 0-7279-0049-9.

This highly readable paperback, coming as it does from our less hidebound colleagues down under (Westmead Hospital and the University of Western Sydney in New South Wales), is not about public health itself but about the relevant and important task of putting across the messages of public health promotion. Public health practitioners in this country know only too well how difficult it is to inspire the public with the preventive message which, like most good news, lacks the drama and personal interest which the media demands and feeds on. Your reviewer remembers only too well, from two decades ago, the apparently insuperable difficulties which faced the Army Medical Services' emergent anti-smoking campaign. Had we then had recourse to this book by Chapman and Lupton the outcome might well have been more effective; health education – as we knew it then – was dull and dreary in the extreme.

Not all that is recommended by way of media advocacy is applicable to promoting the lessons of better health throughout the Army, but there is nonetheless much that can – and indeed should – be learned by the RAMC. The authors' philosophy is aptly summarized by Chapman in the preface: "Quite easily our most important weapon,

however, was the way we framed ourselves as Davids against the Goliath of the tobacco industry". Developing this theme the author sees his "advocacy work as a legitimate and important part of public health practice".

Chapter 5 – The A-Z of public health advocacy – contains an exhaustive list of the very many ways in which the media may be manipulated to the public health advantage; some of these are excellent and, in particular, the section on "Jargon and ghetto language" can be commended to a wider medical audience. Other sections, for example "Crank Letters" or "Whistleblowers" savour of an antipodean hyperbole not entirely suited to a more restrained usage in this country. But in essence *The Fight for Public Health* provides valuable lessons and clear direction for the enterprising practitioner, civilian or military, who wishes to practise effective health promotion.

JP CROWDY

Infection Control – A Community Perspective. MA Worsley, KA Ward, S Privett, L Parker, JM Roberts, Eds. ICNA, 1994. Pp 99. £19.00. Illustrated. ISBN No: 1 9515620 3 7.

Each of the 12 chapters is written by a separate author covering a specific area of infection control in community services. By reading the whole book the vast majority of essential information can be found, but unfortunately each topic does not fully cover the problems peculiar to that entity. Overall there is much repetition of standard information and it is difficult to find advice on specific topics. Unfortunately there is no index and no cross referencing between the chapters.

The book could be of value to those considering the topic of infection control in the community as an overview of the whole subject, but I feel it would need to be complemented by a standard text book on infection control.

DN FAITHFULL-DAVIES

Martin-Leake Double VC. A Clayton. Leo Cooper, 1994. Pp 250. £18.95. Illustrated. ISBN No 0 85052 397 4.

After Ann Clayton's previous book on the Corps' other VC & Bar recipient, Noel Godfrey Chavasse, Martin-Leake Double VC was eagerly awaited.

Born into an illustrious ancestry stretching back to the reign of Queen Anne, Arthur Martin-Leake arrived into the world in 1874 at Marshalls Estate, High Cross Hertfordshire. One of eight children, of which six were boys, Arthur was the son to cause his father the least problems in his education, entering Westminster School where he stayed until July 1891 when, due to financial constraints, he returned to High Cross and private tutoring.

He entered the medical school at University College Hospital in October 1893 aged 19, becoming a FRCS in May 1896 and eventually taking up a House Surgeons Post in West Herts Infirmary in 1899. With the outbreak of the Boer War patriotic fever took hold of Arthur and the book details his efforts to get to South Africa, which he did in March 1900 as a trooper in the Imperial Yeomanry, rather than wait for the medical arrangements to be finalised. Eventually becoming a Civil Surgeon and finally still wanting action, taking a Commission as a Surgeon in the South African Constabulary formed under Baden-Powell, the action that would lead to the initial award of the VC is detailed.

It is in these chapters on South Africa that readers first encounter Martin-Leake's dislike for females, especially nurses.

After the Boer War Martin-Leake joined his brothers in India, working for the Railways, and here we read once again of his dislike for the females he encountered. A passion for hunting and for writing about it takes its roots here, the fruits of which the Museum has examples of. With the outbreak of World War One Arthur left India to join up, leaving his VC in India because after all 'it would be over by Christmas', but not before he was to win the first bar ever awarded to a VC winner.

After the war Arthur returned to India and his love of hunting. Despite his dislike of females he did marry in 1930, but sadly his wife killed herself after just two years of marriage. Arthur lived on until June 1953.

By access to personal letters and papers Ann Clayton has managed to paint a picture of a very brave and modest man who, like his contemporary Noel Chavasse, was not entirely happy with the organisation of the RAMC, but who has left a lasting reminder of the glorious history that the Corps enjoys.

A highly recommended read.

PH STARLING

ABC of Antenatal Care. 2nd Edn. G Chamberlain. BMJ Publishing Group, 1994. Pp iv + 85. Illustrated. ISBN No: 0-7279-0884-7.

Most practitioners will be familiar with the BMJ ABC publications. In an A4 format, they give overviews of areas of medicine which are practical, rather than academic and erudite.

The layout of "Antenatal Care" is easy to read and it is simply but well illustrated. The areas covered are sensibly chosen and cover most of the problems presenting routinely during antenatal care. The chapter on working during pregnancy is particularly welcome, attention to such practical details in such a book is unusual.

Prof Chamberlain's book gives a critical appraisal of the worth of antenatal care, the general tone of scepticism regarding many of the investigations routinely performed, often with little justification, is refreshing. There are,

however, areas in this book where his scepticism is lacking. Reliance on bed rest to prevent deterioration of hypertension, continuous hydralazine to treat it when it does and use of nuchal fat pad oedema to "reliably" predict Down syndrome are just some examples of where the need to be concise has conveniently plastered over contentious grey areas.

When covering such a wide area in such a small book (80 pages), detail is bound to suffer: this is a book for undergraduates, although it would also make good preparatory reading before commencing an SHO post in O&G.

L ROBERTS

Outcomes into Clinical Practice. T Delamothe Ed. BMJ Publishing Group, 1994. Pp ix + 169. UK £17.95. ISBN No: 0-7279-0888-X.

Purchasing health services means identifying, prioritising and monitoring the outcomes of interventions. The introduction of accountability and of the purchasing function as the central themes of the Griffiths and internal market NHS reforms have shifted the spotlight on clinical outcomes.

This book presents the various contributions made to the growing international debate on outcomes by the speakers of a conference organised by the BMA, the BMJ Publishing Group and the UK Clearing House for Information on the Assessment of Health Outcomes.

Contributors to this book (and to the conference) represent many health care disciplines, reflecting the multidisciplinary approach to the formulation and assessment of outcomes.

The book has an impressive preamble by the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Kenneth Calman, who charts his department's commitment to outcome research. Other chapters deal with outcomes in mental health, acute care, minimally invasive surgery, primary health care and orthopaedic surgery. The underdeveloped topic of using cost-effectiveness data to guide purchasing decisions is also discussed.

I found the collection of essays based on the experience of clinicians trying to practically define outcomes the best in the book. For instance, Bardsley and Cleary use clinical assessment tools (such as knee scores, joint loosening and the Nottingham Health Profile) to assess outcome of total knee replacement at follow-up.

They notice great variation in outcomes from patient to patient and between departments and discuss their comparability, a recurring theme in the book.

Elsewhere, Alan Williams returns to his familiar theme of deciding whether the aim of health services is clinical excellence, no matter how costly, or the fostering of health within available resources. Williams points out that if it is the latter, a fundamental shift is still required for health care workers' attitudes to recognize the goal and

act on the implications. The current debate on outcomes and clinical effectiveness in my view signals the beginning of such a shift.

As the Army Medical Services get smaller and interface more with the National Health Services we increasingly need to be aware of contemporary issues, and “now speak”. Contractual relationships, once something you came across when buying a car, will guide our daily working lives, whether operating inside or outside Defence Agencies. At the basis of it all will be clinical accountability. This book provides a good, readable overview of the subject and is a thoroughly recommended buy.

TO JEFFERSON

A Very Short Book of Surgery. 3rd Edn. P Ryan. Chapman & Hall Medical, 1994. Pp iv + 173. £9.99. ISBN No: 0-412-61530-4.

This small book has 157 pages of text and is pocket sized. The author states that the book seeks to deal with the presentation, diagnosis and principles of management of common surgical problems using the briefest possible narrative. The chapters are divided into symptoms, eg acute abdominal pain, and then outlines possible causes and management. Necessarily, in such a short book the text is extremely brief, but there are some good one line statements.

The topics related to the gut are clear, concise and are good reading. They include abdominal pain, swellings and obstruction; diarrhoea and constipation and anal disorders. Inguino-scrotal swellings is also covered well. Similarly, urology is well outlined but on the subject of haematuria no mention is made of medical disorders, eg glomerular disease.

In some of the allied surgical specialities there are some sweeping statements which are perhaps too cursory and misleading. For instance, on page 9 “Loose teeth over an alveolar sweeping (jaw) suggest a diagnosis of periosteal fibroma or fibrosarcoma”. These are extremely rare conditions. More likely are inflammatory cysts (or which no mention is made) and hyperostosis related to periodontal disease. On page 112 “1st and 2nd degree Potts fractures are treated by brief immobilisation in a plaster cast. In 3rd degree the posterior tibial malleolus must be maintained in reduction with a screw”. These statements are clearly against the world renowned AO teaching of fractures. In the topic of headaches “Treat migraine with drugs such as ergotamine and methysergide”. These are dangerous drugs and are rarely used now as there are better alternatives.

I am not sure who would benefit most from this book, although the author has “directed it at medical students but surgical trainees and nurses may find it useful”. It is not a white coat pocket book nor is it a beginner’s surgical book. However, it is worth reading during those quiet moments before the professor does his next ward round.

JB LYALL

My Dearest Mama & Papa 1914-1918 War Letters
Written by Octavius C Moore Haines. B Beck. D Brown & Sons Ltd, 1994. Pp vi + 295. £19.95. Illustrated. ISBN No: 1 872808 28 X.

It is a privilege to review a book such as this. It is a magnum opus of love. The late Barbara Beck, daughter of Octavius C Moore Haines, has lovingly collected what she can find of those letters written to his parents by her father whilst serving in the Near East during the 1914-1915 war.

She studied books, visited museums and travelled in the Middle East to provide the background to her fathers service, as portrayed in his letters.

She summarises the War Campaigns that affected him including a description of the disastrous landings on the Gallipoli Peninsular and the attempted forcing of the Dardanelles, which came so near to success. The ‘Forgotten’ but brave and successful Salonika Army also figures in the book, as “O.C.H” spent part of his service with that Army as a “medical” orderly. Although in the RAMC, Octavius spent all his time doing dental work there being no official Royal Army Dental Corps at the time. This deficiency was remedied when the C in C Earl Haig suffered an attack of toothache.

After the war Octavius was granted two years exemption from his studies and qualified as a dental surgeon from the Middlesex Hospital and Royal Dental School London in 1921.

Mrs Beck’s studies culminate in trips to Cairo and Salonika to retrace and gather the atmosphere of her father’s journeys. The result is a mass of photographs and an informative account of life in the Near East which are fascinating to the reader and would-be traveller as they are nostalgic to the older soldier.

One is brought back to “today” on reading that the outbreak of 1914-1918 war was triggered by the association of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria in Sarajevo by a young Serb student!!

At £20.00 this book is very reasonably priced.

JF WEBB

ERRATUM

Book Review – Physical Sign in Orthopaedics. HJ Walsh and L Klenerman. *JR Med Corps* 1995; 1:52.
Price quoted was incorrect, cost not £29.95 but £14.95.