

which provides maps of promoter regions and the alternative splicing arrangements receptor genes.

The following three chapters discuss the biological actions of the cytokines *in vitro* and *in vivo* and take up almost half the book but do not have the narrative and impact of the earlier chapters. This is partly to do with the subject content but needs tighter editing to sharpen the reader's focus on the most important features of these areas.

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One World. The Health and Survival of the Human Species in the 21st Century. Edited by Robert Lanza. Santa Fe, New Mexico: Health Press, 1996. 325pp. \$25.00.

This book tackles a very big topic. The editor, an American clinician-biologist, has assembled forty eminent contributors. The result is rather predictable: Some contributions are thoughtful, others are skimpy or platitudinous. One, by the Director-General of WHO, is embarrassingly brief and disjointed.

Among the many contributors—scientists, doctors, politicians and international civil servants—there is a distinct shortage of public health scientists. Hence, there is little population-based epidemiologically-informed assessment of future health prospects. Senior clinician-presidents of national medical associations wrestle with the usual tangle of political, technical and ethical issues that beset health-care systems. Famous laboratory scientists (Salk, Gallo, Montagnier, Pauling, etc.) contemplate a braver new world of vaccines, antiviral agents and age-titrated vitamin supplementation. But these are hardly broad visions of how next century's world might tackle the huge social and public health problems that several of

the other contributors identify—our burgeoning population, widening rich-poor divide, uncontrolled urbanisation, destabilised natural systems, and indications that some food-producing systems are faltering.

The volume contains some prestigious inunctions by Jimmy Carter, Boutros Boutros-Ghali and others. Contributions by various national ministers of health are mostly self-vindicating, shackled by the immediacies of winning the health-consumer vote. However, there are some enlightening chapters that recognise the wider challenges to human health that loom on our horizon: Thomas Lovejoy explains the enduring importance of biodiversity to human wellbeing and health; T Adeoye Lambo (Deputy Director-General of WHO) explores the major threats to health from demographic, environmental and socioeconomic pressures and affirms that McKeown-Sigerist view of the primacy of social-environmental conditions as determinants of public health; and W Harding le Riche exhorts us to discard technological preoccupations: 'When we think of medical and scientific research, we should always think of them in ecological terms.'

There is a clearly-argued chapter by the British MRC's David Plastow and Dai Rees ('Goals for the Next Century'). They anticipate two major emerging influences: 'the health impacts of environmental change, both global and local, and the health impacts of living with social changes that will continue to occur with increasing pace'. While they foresee continuing important successes from the molecular biology stable, they also see a need for a wider-visioned and integrating 'post-reductionist' science, transcending traditional disciplinary barriers. Demographic changes will focus our attention on improved contraception, increases in infectious diseases, and an ageing-related shift in morbidity profile. Environmental—especially climatic—change is likely to affect

infectious diseases, food production, and patterns of migration. Social change, especially urbanisation and its unprecedented fluidity of social relations, may augment socioeconomic and behaviourally-based health problems. They therefore conclude: 'health and health research must become increasingly central to the governance of our societies'.

This book, rather like DNA, contains many segments that are uninformative. However, there are sufficient information-and-ideas-rich loci to make it worth a browse. The topic alone surely justifies that.

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Symptoms of Disease in Childhood. By T J David. Blackwell Science Oxford, 1995. 281pp. £15.95.

Two books, *Common Symptoms of Childhood* and *The Normal Child*, by the late Ronald Illingworth stood out as classic texts which provided basic common sense information on children and the symptoms associated with their illnesses. This book by Professor T J Davis is a successor to *Common Symptoms of Childhood* and aims to list the causes of individual symptoms and to provide further information that will allow the unravelling of the symptom.

The book is divided into 15 main chapters within which there are 85 sections; the majority of chapters group symptoms associated with the major systems. The first two and final chapters deal with pain, eating and growth, and miscellaneous symptoms respectively. The lists of causes are placed in order of importance, with further classification by age or anatomical site when appropriate. These lists are comprehensive and include unusual causes of a symptom; and features of the common and important (dangerous or life-threatening) symptoms are clearly described in the text that follows each list.

The majority of sections and chapters are excellent; I found that the section on factitious epilepsy included a superb overview of factitious illness. The final chapter deals with important practical difficulties and sources of error when dealing with parents and trying to unravel symptoms. The reader is advised to be more questioning and examples are given that illustrate 'the reason behind a fact is often more important than the fact itself'. This short chapter also includes helpful information on how to find out what parents actually mean when describing a symptom.

Overall, I have no doubt that this book will become a 'classic' that complements the standard paediatric textbooks. It will be invaluable for paediatricians looking for unusual causes of a symptom or for causes of unusual symptoms and it should be on the essential reading list for those studying for the part 2 MRCP. This book could also have a useful role in the undergraduate medical student education with the ever increasing emphasis being placed on problem solving.

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Prescribing in Pregnancy. (Second edition). Edited by Peter Rubin. BMJ Publishing Group, London, 1995. 125pp. £14.95.

This book makes for good one-stop shopping for the general practitioner, midwife, career obstetrician or pharmacist faced with drug safety issues during pregnancy. The book extols a common-sense approach and presents information about specific drug exposures from a clinical perspective. In addition, the book emphasises the general principles of prescribing in pregnancy. These include the difficulties inherent in extrapolating from animal toxicology studies to humans, the biases inherent in case reports of human exposure, and the art of balancing maternal

benefit with potential fetal, neonatal or paediatric risk. Therefore, the book should enable practitioners to approach the management of most gestational drug exposures even in the absence of much specific information on reproductive risk.

Drugs are reviewed by indication rather than alphabetically by name. This has lent itself to brief, useful discussion of the impact of pregnancy on the more common medical disorders requiring treatment during pregnancy. Key points presented at the end of each chapter are excellent, and the interested reader is often referred to detailed published reviews. However, variation in style and content from one chapter to another is a potential problem. Asthma, epilepsy, thromboembolism and endocrine disorders are handled particularly well. Use of aspirin and anti-hypertensives is not well covered, although the subject has been extensively reviewed elsewhere [1]. Reference to the Cochrane Database of Perinatal Trials is notably absent. The chapter on psychotropic drugs, which has changed little from the last edition, is overly alarmist (particularly with respect to the teratogenicity of benzodiazepines [2,3] and lithium [4]) and the references are out of date.

In summary, the reader of this book will come away with an understanding of the general principles of prescribing in pregnancy as well as the risks of specific drug exposures. This book should be required reading for anyone interested in the care of pregnant women.

References

- 1 National high blood pressure education program working group report on high blood pressure in pregnancy. *Am J Obstet Gynaecol* 1990;**63**:1689-712.
- 2 McElhatton PR. The effects of benzodiazepine use during pregnancy and lactation. *Reprod Toxicol* 1994;**8**:461-75.
- 3 Altshuler LL, Szuba MP. Course of psychiatric disorders in pregnancy. Dilemmas in pharmacologic management. *Neurol Clin* 1994;**12**:613-35.

- 4 Cohen LS, Friedman JM, Jefferson JW, Johnson EM, Weiner ML. A re-evaluation of risk of in utero exposure to lithium. *JAMA* 1994;**27**:146-50.

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Books received

We thank the authors and publishers who have sent these books and list them in acknowledgment of their courtesy. Those received that are most likely to interest readers of the journal will be reviewed when space permits.

Ectopic pregnancy: Diagnosis and management. By Isabel Stable. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996. 160pp. £18.95.

Fighting for Life. By Gilbert Park and Kieron Saunders. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996. 112pp. £9.99.

Bickerstaff's Neurological Examination in Clinical Practice. Sixth edition. By John Spillane. Blackwell Science, Oxford, 1996. 382pp. £39.50.

ABC of Spinal Cord Injury. Second edition. By David Grundy and Andrew Swain. BMJ Publishing Group, London, 1996. 61pp. £9.95.

Surgical Principles. Edited by Irving Taylor and Stephen J Karran. Arnold, London, 1996. 212pp. £37.50.

Medicine for Examinations. Third edition. By RJ Epstein. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, 1996. 400pp. £17.50.

The Medical Student's Guide to Top Board Scores: USMLE Steps 1 & 2. Second edition. By Peter Thomas Rogers. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1996. 146pp. £15.00.

RX Prescription for the Boards: USMLE Step 2. By Radhika Sekhri Breden, Cheryl Denenberg, Kate C Feibusch, Stephen N Gomperts. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1996. 485pp. £17.00.

America's Best Hospitals. The Editors of *US News & World Report*. John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1996. 508pp. £14.99.

Guide to the Guidelines. Second edition. Edited by Peter Smith. Radcliffe Medical Press, Oxford, 1996. 120pp. £19.95.

Science Friction. (Humour). By Lubertus Berrens. Hogrefe and Huber, Seattle, 1995. 95pp. \$19.50 plus \$4.60 p&p.