

COMPENDIUM OF DATA SHEETS

In the June *Journal* you criticise WB Pharmaceuticals for failing to mention in the paragraph on contraindications that "infants should not be given breastmilk from mothers taking warfarin". Surely the prohibition of breast feeding by women under treatment with drugs should be a routine broken only in special situations. In the case of warfarin, although Whitby and Briton (1957) stated that the breast-fed baby was not affected, cases of bleeding in such babies have been reported (Eckstein and Jack, 1970).

If there is some compelling medical or psychological reason why a mother receiving an anticoagulant should breast-feed her baby, it may be worth considering Vigran's (1965) recommendation that breast-fed babies should have one mg synthetic vitamin K daily while the mother is on anticoagulant treatment.

Perhaps a note on the prescribing in general

of drugs for lactating women and for pregnant women might be added to the next issue of the *British National Formulary* after the sections on prescribing for children and prescribing for the elderly.

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REFERENCES

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BOOK REVIEW

Common diseases: Their nature, incidence and care (1974). FRY, JOHN. London: Medical and Technical Publishing Company Limited.

For those doctors interested in general practise as a specialty and for those who wish to practise primary medical care to a high degree of competence, there is a relative dearth of publications devoted to the common diseases seen in general practice.

Having read the book, I am full of questions, criticisms, disagreements, as well as admiration and pleasure at being presented with John Fry's personal view of 20 common diseases seen in our surgeries. He has succeeded in collating most of the current views on the aetiology, clinical features, assessment and management of these conditions and diseases. He does however fall into the trap of many doctors when talking about their specialty, by using the phrase 'in my practice'. In any text book or reference book it is important to avoid emotive phraseology when referring to one's own statistics. Although there is a wealth of statistical information in this book, a great deal of it consists of Dr Fry's own personal figures. He has, as we all know, done a great deal to supply facts and figures about general practice; but even he must curb his natural enthusiasm and offer the national statistics on every occasion when writing in a book such as this. Undergraduate students and postgraduate vocational trainees especially, will demand to know not only what we do in our practice, but what happens on a national

basis. I was unhappy about this and the way his statistics was presented.

Having been critical of the scientific content of the book it is important to redress the balance. It is an easily readable and enjoyable book and quite relevant to general practice. It is full of information and it is easy to refer to sections. It contains current thinking on many controversial subjects of management and treatment. It will consequently be valuable for use in small-group teaching seminars, eight in the surgery or at the half or full day release seminars during vocational training.

It is to Dr Fry's credit that he is able to produce a book as good as this. Its 20 conditions will form the basis for controversial discussion out of which could come new ideas which will enhance the quality of care given to patients suffering from these conditions. Whether he has gone far enough and whether the book is detailed enough to be able to stimulate the enhancement, I am not so sure.

This is a book which should be found in most medical centres and general-practice libraries. It contains much food for thought. If this food for thought can be translated into the improvement of our branch of medicine then this book will have been worth writing and Dr John Fry will have performed another great service to general practice.

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