

RESEARCH IN GENERAL PRACTICE

J. G. R. Howie

*Croom Helm,
London (1983)*

193 pages. Price £8.95
(paperback)

One of the standard texts in general practice is now available in paperback. Although a relatively small book of 193 pages, it is full of good sense and practical advice to the would-be researcher. The comments on the use of statistics in research are particularly helpful. These emphasize the truth that statistical tests applied properly to reliable and valid material will enhance the insight with which results are interpreted, but statistical tests applied wrongly to poor material do nothing but harm.

E.G.B

THE MUSCULOSKELETAL MANUAL

Jacob S. Birnbaum

*Academic Press,
London (1982)*

377 pages. Price £13.20
(paperback)

This paperback is an attempt to remedy what the author sees as a gap in medical education—the failure to take account of common and minor problems—in contrast to the usual emphasis on a hospital-based view of highly-selected morbidity. It is intended primarily for family doctors, as well as a range of other health professionals.

The text is set out on an anatomical basis, with further subdivisions according to patients' complaints, and lavish use is made of line drawings. A short bibliography (mainly American) and an index are included.

This is a most practical book, dealing with the everyday problems of general practice. There are examples of handouts for patients to help with problems such as selecting appropriate footwear, living with degenerative joint disease and how to use active exercises to the best advantage. There are helpful summaries on common conditions like cramp and on practical procedures such as injection techniques.

Although the book is geared to American practice (proprietary preparations, for example, are listed under brand names, some of which are unfamiliar), the content is more widely applicable to general practice in the NHS. This appears to be a worthwhile addi-

tion to the range of books for new entrants to general practice. Experienced general practitioners will be interested to see some of their prejudices reinforced and others refuted!

JAMES D. E. KNOX

AN ATLAS OF CLINICAL NEUROLOGY (3rd edition)

J. D. Spillane, J. A. Spillane

*Oxford University Press,
Oxford (1982)*

470 pages. Price £25.00

Dr J. D. Spillane has been joined by his son for the third edition of this well known book. Seventy-five photographs have been added and the text has been updated in certain sections. I found it a delightful and unusual book and enjoyed reading it very much. As the title suggests, it is essentially a pictorial book based upon good quality monochrome photographs. The only colour plates are a series of 22 fundus photographs, also of high quality. Some aspects of neurological disorders such as muscular wasting and skeletal deformities are readily appreciated from the still photographs; but other disorders, such as involuntary movements and ataxia, come over less clearly.

The clinical photographs are accompanied by legends, often giving brief clinical histories, and also more formal text. The latter is written in a relaxed, chatty style and is very much the authors' personal view rather than a systematic account. I found myself in agreement with most of their generalizations in the text. There are many practical clinical tips and adages, of which the following is typical: 'In the UK wearing tinted glasses in the consulting room is nearly always a sign of neurosis, rarely of fashion, and it is practically never an indication that the sun is shining outside.'

The emphasis of the text is rather variable; for example, there are two paragraphs on hyperostosis in meningiomas and yet only brief legends accompany several pictures of facial hemiatrophy. I particularly enjoyed the sections dealing with cervical spondylosis, congenital abnormalities of the craniovertebral junction and disorders of the visual system.

I would not regard this book as particularly suitable for junior medical students, mainly because of its size, scope and rather uneven emphasis. It is not a book for beginners, but it can be strongly recommended to more experienced doctors, both in general practice and hospital medicine. Medical and surgical

neurologists will also find much of interest and I shall be consulting my copy regularly.

R. E. CULL

A GP TRAINING HANDBOOK. For use by trainers and trainees

M. S. Hall (editor)

*Blackwell Scientific Publications,
Oxford (1983)*

223 pages. Price £7.50 (paperback)

With its useful drug list and source material this is a practical book which will allow trainers and trainees to get the best out of vocational training.

There are chapters on preparation of the practice for teaching. All the chapters are short and well laid out and the whole book is attractive to handle. Perhaps the most interesting chapter is one which gives a guide for tutorials with a list of topics and key questions which should be tackled during the tutorial.

In a handbook of this size it is necessary for authors to be definite and authoritative in their presentation and the contributors to this book have not shirked this. They will no doubt be criticised for some of their recommendations about training, but the effect of this style has been to produce a refreshingly direct, pragmatic and useful book.

E.G.B.

HEALTH, DOCTORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

Zofia Butrym, John Horder

*Routledge and Kegan Paul,
London (1983)*

228 pages. Price £4.95 (paperback)

Here is a welcome addition to Routledge and Kegan Paul's social science series. The opening three chapters will be of interest and value to general practitioner trainees and medical students as a useful and concise introduction to the basic concepts and methods used in medicine and social work. The book is aimed at social workers in training and of necessity contains some chapters which describe symptoms and illnesses in simple lay language.

Case histories are used to illustrate the interplay between physical, psychological and social factors in illness and health and an interesting feature is the way in which the different approach of doctors and social workers to the same patient is described.

E.G.B.