

Medical Surveys and Clinical Trials. Second edition. Edited by Prof. L. J. WITTS, M.A., M.D., SC.D., F.R.C.P. London. Oxford University Press. 1964. Pp. xi+367. Price 42s.

The general practitioner who wishes to advance his knowledge of epidemiology and to improve his methods of work has few textbooks to which he can turn for guidance either on general principles or on matters of precise detail. The first edition of this book served many of us well, and the second edition is likely to be even more widely welcomed. Principles of epidemiological study do not vary between hospital and 'field' practice and though many of the techniques described were worked out in the hospital context their adaptation to practice circumstances is not difficult. The kinds of study with which we are becoming increasingly familiar, prevalence surveys, retrospective and prospective studies, follow-up methods and the like, are all discussed by acknowledged experts. Practice studies often involve the work of a number of observers and the chapter on group research, with a full bibliography on observer error and variation, is of particular value.

Though the College has not concerned itself with the conduct of therapeutic trials the section on this subject will be widely read, as will that on operational research with which we are likely to become increasingly interested. The value of operational studies of the optimal use of scarce commodities, first employed in World War II, will be great in proportion to our need to provide medical care effectively and with diminished resources in medical manpower. The second part of the book considers certain applications of the methods described in the first. Genetic studies are now practicable with a precision undreamed of a few years ago and family practice offers a wide field for studies of familial disorders. Nutrition, chest and cardiovascular diseases, the arthritides and cancer have all provided subjects for study or actual investigation by the College at some time or another and a chapter on mental illness contains much that is relevant to some of the College's recent work. This is not a book written "for students and general practitioners". It is intended for postgraduate clinical research workers and many are to be found in general practice today, a field in which the serious study of epidemiology has limitless opportunities both at home and overseas.

Research Reviews. 1963-64. Edited by DR D. J. E. L. CARRICK. London. Medical News Ltd. 1964. Pp. x+230. 21s.

This volume contains articles summarizing recent progress in research in many fields, all of which have appeared week by week in *Medical News*. Each monograph is deliberately written in non-technical terms but is authoritative and sufficiently detailed to provide a stimulus to further reading. Some of the reviews are quite brief, but all are lucid and well presented. They do not only report exotica, but they describe also progress in matters which are of every-day concern to the doctor in practice. An account of analgesia in childbirth is followed by another on the immunological diagnosis of pregnancy, and elsewhere in the book cystic fibrosis of the pancreas is followed by the "ageing process in bone". The articles which are grouped under broad general headings are neither so short as