

difficult. It is a fair guess from the context that ergonovine is our ergometrine; to make quite sure takes time and there were several drugs (dilatant, unitensin) which your reviewer failed to identify.

In an American book it is interesting to see that eight pages are devoted to home delivery which "is still done in some large cities in the U.S.A.". For a delivery room "the kitchen is usually selected because a large table, water, a tub or sink, and a stove for warmth and sterilization are customarily available". A useful and comprehensive ready reference book which will be more valuable in the U.S.A. than in Great Britain.

Pulmonary Physiology in Clinical Practice. W. R. PACE, JR., M.D. Oxford. Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1965. Pp. viii + 143. Price 24s.

This book is an excellent account of the pulmonary part of the respiratory mechanism. All the useful means of elucidating dyspnoea are clearly expounded, and ingenious methods are suggested of getting results without expensive apparatus. It must have been a stroke of genius to realize that a spirometer test could be carried out by blowing into a polythene bag, and then measuring the air in it by squeezing it down a tube into an upturned measure full of water, thus arriving at an estimate of vital capacity sufficiently accurate for clinical purposes.

The author explains the importance of the measurement of expiratory peak flow, and thinks that this test should be carried out as a routine on all over-thirties, with the object of spotting the patient whose chest is beginning to lose efficiency as a result of too much smoking. The flow rate falls with age, and the rate of fall accelerates in smokers as 'chronic bronchitis' and emphysema develop.

Finally, there is space for things like the measurement of arterial gas vapour pressures, and so on, and a section on treatment. A stimulating and informative book, and one small enough to slip into the pocket.

Chemotherapy of Cancer. Proceedings of an International Symposium. Lugano. 1964. Edited by PLACIDUS A. PLATTNER. Amsterdam, London, New York. Elsevier Publishing Co. Pp. ix + 324. Price 75s.

This book contains a report of the proceedings of the international symposium on Chemotherapy of Cancer held on 28 April to 1 May 1964 at Lugano. It was organized by the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences and sponsored by F. Hoffman-La Roche & Co. Ltd.

There are 37 contributions from research workers, four from Great Britain, ten from U.S.A. and the remainder from the continent of Europe. Some idea of the amount of research which has taken place in this field can be imagined from the hundreds of quoted references and the statement that U.S.A. alone spends over \$30,000,000 per annum on cancer chemotherapy. Though much of the chemistry detailed in this book is undoubtedly above the heads of most general practitioners, including this reviewer, a glance at the summaries which accompany most of the contributions

will frequently entice one to fuller reading with worth-while results.

There is no doubt that a large number of drugs inimical to, or destructive of, cancer cells are now known. A search goes on for those with the most specific action and least damaging side-effects. Those at present available are clearly listed and their value shown. Treatment by cytotoxic drugs can be properly undertaken only with laboratory help, for these drugs all damage the haemopoietic system to some extent. If no such help is available, there is one drug which could be given with success and safety, using the white cell count as a guide to dosage. This is cyclophosphamide, for it lowers the white cell count before affecting the platelets or red cells. The treatment of hormone-dependent cancers is well described. Though the mechanisms are by no means fully understood, treatment can be very effective, especially in cancers of the prostate and breast.

Research into cancer chemotherapy has made indirect contributions to the study of other biochemical problems such as growth, immune reactions, protein synthesis, chromosome analyses and teratology.

The book appears to be a private venture and is well produced. This reviewer noted only one spelling error.

Essentials of Fluid Balance. Third edition. D. A. K. BLACK, M.D., F.R.C.P.
Oxford. Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1964. Pp. xii+164.
Price 25s.

The third edition of this beautifully written little book offers far more than its modest title suggests. The general practitioner will find within its pages a lucid general account of water, sodium and potassium which will illuminate for him some of the darker corners of this admittedly difficult subject. Not only does Professor Black explain with clarity and style the theoretical aspects of fluid and electrolyte balance, he also relates the chemical changes to clinical syndromes.

He describes the chemical imbalance in oedema, diabetic ketosis, respiratory failure, gastro-enteritis and many other commonly encountered clinical conditions, and in a new chapter called 'Hydrion' he explains admirably the latest nomenclature in this complicated field and emphasizes the importance of hydrogen ion concentration in understanding acidosis and alkalosis.

Practical advice is given on laboratory investigations and treatment and a very adequate list of references is provided for those readers who are stimulated by this excellent little book to look further into this fascinating subject.

May's Manual of the Diseases of the Eye for Students and Practitioners.
23rd edition. Edited by JAMES H. ALLEN, M.D. Baltimore, U.S.A.
The Williams and Wilkins Co. 1965. Pp. ix+382. Price £3 14s. 0d.

This is a "manual for students and general practitioners". The fact of it being the 23rd edition tells of its success. It is written with conspicuous clarity in concise English and is easy to read and understand.