

Correspondence

A new look at general practice

Sir,

In your editorial (*J. Coll. gen. Practit.* 1965, 10, 1) you write :“ The Dutch College of general practitioners has started a school for doctors’ secretaries.” This is not true. In Holland there are several schools for doctors’ secretaries (“ doctors’ assistants ”) and some of them are under supervision of the Royal Dutch Medical Association. The College itself has no connection with any of these schools, but several general practitioners in Holland have a doctor’s assistant from one of these schools.

REITZE S. TEN CATE.

Wassenaar,
Holland

Editor’s Note:—

We regret the error which was due to a misreading of an article on the subject.

The place of the family doctor in obstetrics in the future

Sir,

I have only just had an opportunity to read Dr G. N. Marsh’s excellent essay (*J. Coll. gen. Practit.* 1965, 9, 117) but I must take issue with him on his proposed paediatric flying squad for the emergency resuscitation of the new-born: no squad could possibly arrive in time. To quote from my letter on this subject to the *British Medical Journal* last October¹, “ Today this means that proper resuscitation equipment should be set up before the baby is born and that a doctor should be present who knows how to use it. Ideally the midwives should also be trained in its use. This should become part of the ‘ bones of the business ’, just as the flying squad has become, only this time we, the attendants, must do the job ourselves, as the baby would be dead before any neonatal resuscitation squad could arrive.”

My letter mentioned the equipment developed for this purpose by Dr H. Barrie and his colleagues.² The total cost is around £30 but £18 of this is the cost of a Draegar-Normalair 120 litre oxygen cylinder and reducing valve, which should in any case be part of every general practitioner’s general emergency equipment.

The more recent entrants to general practice will have learnt the technique of intubation during obstetric or paediatric house appointments, but all general-practitioner obstetricians not conversant with the technique

should apply for instruction to the consultant in charge of obstetrics in their area: at least two films are available, one from Smith, Kline and French Laboratories Ltd., Welwyn Garden City, Herts, and one from St Thomas' Hospital, London, S.E.1, illustrating Dr Barrie's equipment: presumably one day models will be available to practise on.

Woodstock.

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REFERENCES

1. Millar, J. R. M. *Brit. med. J.* (1964). 2, 1075.
 2. Barrie, H. *Lancet* (1963). 1, 650.
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Book Reviews

Fluid Therapy—Disorders of Electrolyte Balance. W. H. TAYLOR, M.A., D.M., M.R.C.P. Oxford. Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1965. Pp. xiv+175. Price 18s. 6d.

This book is a comprehensive and systematized account of the disorders of water and electrolyte balance, the proper way to make a metabolic diagnosis, the treatment of certain special aspects of diet, and the like. It is intended to be carried in the pocket of the young hospital doctor and to this end has a soft cover and rounded corners. The paper is not of good quality and your reviewer thinks that the book is physically too large to serve its functions well, but the contents are excellent and there is a good deal in it which is of value to a general practitioner in his ordinary domiciliary practice. For instance, the effects of potassium depletion, which are dealt with in the book, are sometimes seen in general practice in patients who are receiving oral diuretics but failing to take their potassium supplements, and some of the other conditions described can be diagnosed in the patient's house from time to time. Those doctors who wish to understand more, in a systematic way, about fluid and electrolyte balance can read this book with advantage.

Accident Prevention and Life Saving. JOHN H. HUNT, D.M., F.R.C.P., assisted by MARY MARKS, S.R.N., O.N.C. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1965. Pp. xii and 320. Price 35s.

This volume contains many short papers from all fields of experience on the subject of accidents. These were the papers at the Royal College of Surgeons convention of May 1963 and there are many eminent contributors, including H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh. One of his remarks is worth quoting: "It is far more dangerous for an inexperienced untrained child cyclist to pedal to school than it is for a pilot in the Royal Air Force aerobatic team to go through his paces". The production and editing of this collection of papers are impeccable. Together these very readable, informative papers make up a complete, dramatic and thought-provoking symposium. Everyone who is interested in accidents and their prevention—and that must include all general practitioners—should read this book.