

An Outline and Atlas of Gynaecological Cytodiagnosis. H. SMOLKA and H. J. Soost. London, Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd. 1965. Pp. x + 208. Price £6.

This second edition, revised and enlarged, culled from the resources of Hanover's Robert Koch Hospital and Munich's Hospital for Women, is set out with the precision and clarity which would be expected from centres where the techniques presumably descend in direct line from Virchow. Both for study and immediate reference at the microscopy bench, there is a wealth of illustrative colour photomicrography; this greatly simplifies the problem of relating descriptive details of normal and abnormal nuclear and cytoplasmic variation to unusual appearances which frequently and unexpectedly enter the field of microscopical examination. Such a compact volume is of equal use to the technician who screens an ever-increasing load of routine cervical smears and to the diagnostic cytologist who must decide on the significance of borderline and unusual cell abnormalities.

In addition to a full cover of the features of cervical and vaginal exfoliation, there are concise sections on ascitic cytology, laboratory organization and method, and a full bibliography.

Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary. Tenth edition. C. W. TABER. Oxford. Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1965. Pp. xiii + 1175 + 132. Price 54s.

This book is the tenth edition of a volume first published in 1940, and packs a remarkable amount of information into a convenient size for the desk. It attempts to be more than a dictionary of definitions, for it gives in addition brief etymologies, diagrams, synonyms, groups of words related to large subjects, nursing procedures, dietetics and extensive information on the first-aid treatment of accidents, poisoning, fractures and other mishaps. A useful appendix presents tabulations of anatomical terms, measurements, food values and physiological standards, and concludes with 373 common words, phrases and terms in French, German, Italian and Spanish. For its size, it is an impressive achievement.

It is not, however, altogether a safe book to be handed to one's secretary, since spellings and pronunciations are American, and American trade names are sometimes quoted in addition to, or instead of, proper names of drugs. Polysyllabic neologisms are found which mercifully have not yet superseded in this country the shorter forms in common use. Although it would be facile to attempt a list of errors and omissions, it is surprising not to find in a 1965 edition references, for example, to such subjects as autoimmune disease or external cardiac massage. Comprehensive medical reference books of this calibre and compact size are rare, and although it is not cheap, its price compares well with other volumes on the market. Until a similar volume appears by an English writer, this book has much to commend it to the general practitioner.