

Book reviews

Fatal civil aircraft accidents. P. J. STEVENS.
Bristol. Wright. 1970. Pp. xii+206.
Price £6.00.

The increasing number of aircraft accidents has led to the development of aviation medicine and pathology. Fortunately this branch of medicine is in its adolescence because the number of air-crashes relative to miles travelled is small. Wing Commander Stevens discusses 74 fatal accidents in which he, or his colleagues at Halton, took part in the investigation. The book is based on an MD thesis, there are four sections: public transport, light aircraft, gliders and the mass disaster. Discussion of clues which may indicate the cause and hence prevention of accidents is a prominent theme. The importance of post-mortem examination in every case is stressed; it is interesting to note that in the fifties this was frequently omitted in the presence of multiple injuries.

Wing Commander Stevens goes into detail on pilot failure due to illness; coronary artery disease is rare as a cause with the professional pilot but more frequent in the private flyer. When alcohol or drugs have been involved it is usually in the private sector. A gliding instructor who successfully concealed his epilepsy and finally crashed is a disturbing example.

The book should be easily understood by the average doctor. It opens a window on a field which is likely to become increasingly important. A general practitioner near an airport or in a mountainous area may find himself confronted with the results of an air-crash. This book would give him an idea on procedure while awaiting the arrival of the expert investigation team. He would also realize the importance of minor deviations from the physical or emotional normal when examining those who intend to pilot aircraft.

A small criticism is the numbering of accidents, apparently with reference to a register at the RAF Institute of Pathology, Halton. I found this confusing and the numbers have no meaning for the reader. Perhaps they will be omitted from a second edition. This book is strongly recommended as an introduction to aviation medicine and pathology. It is well-produced with many illustrations.

Browne's Antenatal Care. J. C. McCLURE BROWNE
F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G., and G. DIXON Ph.D.,
F.R.C.P.(EDIN.), F.R.C.O.G. J. and A. Church-
ill, London. 1970. Pp. vii + 350. £3.00.

This is the tenth edition of the time-honoured textbook of antenatal care by the late Professor F. J. Browne of whom it contains an excellent portrait. First published in 1935, it has been translated into many languages such as Chinese,

Spanish and Turkish. Professor J. C. McClure Browne joined his father in compiling the ninth edition and has now taken over, with the assistance of Geoffrey Dixon, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of Bristol University. Three specialist contributors, Dr Erica Wachtel, Dr J. L. Fluker and Professor John Davis have written sections on vaginal cytology, venereal diseases and the infant born to the diabetic mother respectively, and last being a matter of only half a page. The section on postnatal care has been omitted from this edition but some sections, for instance those on the rhesus factor, diabetes and heart disease, include notes on the management of these conditions in labour and the puerperium.

The general-practitioner obstetrician must not be deterred by the final paragraphs of chapter 1. He must not feel either that general-practice obstetrics is so unexciting that it is not worth practising or that authors who can so underestimate his training and ability are not worth reading. Most of the views expressed on case selection are borrowed from official publications of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to which the authors may have felt obliged to give their support. Ex cathedra statements are not necessarily incontrovertible. The general practitioner may well be right if he considers that he *is* capable of taking responsibility for *some* patients with previous histories of obstetric abnormality or medical disorder; that some with abnormalities and some primigravidae are not beyond his competence; that each patient should be assessed individually rather than in accordance with the statistics of one of the groups into which she can be fitted.

For this edition the text has been completely rewritten and most figures are in the metric system. Maternal weights are given in both metric and avoirdupois but infant weights are only in metric. Doctors will already be familiar with these in grams but they still need to be converted to pounds for mother's benefit. In the appendices there is a useful reducing diet for expectant mothers. A list of references is given at the end of each chapter and there is an adequate index. The text is not without errors of fact (its definition of perinatal mortality) and outmoded opinion (disinfestation of bedding in scabies), but it is, as previous editions have been, a sound and comprehensive guide to antenatal care with which all general practitioners should be familiar.

The registry in cancer control. UICC Technical Report Series, Vol. 5. EDITED BY J. KNOWLEDEN, T. MORK AND A. J. PHILLIPS. Geneva.