

Biochemical values in clinical medicine (1975).
EASTHAM, R. D. Fifth edition. Bristol:
John Wright & Sons Limited.

The rate at which general practitioners are using pathology laboratories is rising by about ten per cent a year. Although the majority of requests are for a relatively small number of widely used investigations, as scientific advances continue, the range of tests used in general practice is constantly increasing.

There is therefore a need for a short simple book listing the biochemical investigations commonly available to general practitioners and ideally this

should be presented so that the normal ranges are clearly shown and the main causes of increased or decreased values are easily seen.

Biochemical values in clinical medicine is such a book and it meets these objectives admirably. Each investigation is listed alphabetically in bold type and underneath the normal range is clearly identified, also in bold type, with the pathological causes of an increased or reduced value listed numerically.

The book fits comfortably in the pocket or in the glove box of a car and can be recommended as being both useful and up to date.

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THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

In any just society an informed moral consensus should precede the making of laws, and these should be neither equivocal, nor ill-informed, nor rigidly coercive. We doctors still enjoy nearly a free licence at least in routine prescribing if not in clinical experiment. This is a heavy responsibility, but it goes farther.

Perhaps we are like nuclear physicists in this respect, though our excuse for inaction and lack of anticipation may be more tenuous, our responsibility more direct, if only because of our longer tradition of public involvement and trust. We must educate each other and advise public and government sooner and more actively than in the past. This is a condition of our integrity and survival as a great profession.

REFERENCE

Walker, W. (1974). *Health Bulletin*, Vol XXXII No 6, 267.

POST-REGISTRATION TRAINING FOR GENERAL PRACTICE

"The post-registration training and experience of the doctors in general practice varied considerably. Three (four per cent) had no post-registration hospital experience and 34 (44 per cent) had experience in obstetrics only. The remaining 41 (52 per cent) had some experience in a non-obstetric specialty for periods ranging from three months to seven years (mean 26 months). . . ."

Stage of decision and subsequent training

"Forty-three (55 per cent) decided *before registration* to follow a career in general practice (30 as undergraduates and 13 during the preregistration year); 32 (74 per cent) of those deciding at this stage became principals within two years and 88 per cent within three years of registration."

REFERENCE

McIntyre, A. D. & Parry, K. M. (1975). *British Journal of Medical Education*, 9, 70-77.