

practitioners would agree that this time scale represents "stability" or enables them to provide "continuous care". The report argues that the workload demanded is not excessive, yet in another part it acknowledges that the single homeless require intensive primary care. Perhaps there are different ways in which this care can be provided, as indicated in the report, by providing surgeries in the hostels and lodging houses. The virtue of the report is in drawing attention to the problem.

KATIE SCHÖPFLIN

TREATMENT—A HANDBOOK OF DRUG THERAPY 1978

V. W. M. Drury et al. (Eds)

Kluwer Medical
London (1978)

1,200 pages. Basic work in five instalments priced £6.50 each (with two binders £1.80 each)

Updating service annually: the charge for the first year is about £7

With the advent of *Practice* came a new style of medical textbook marketing—pay today, and a loose-leaf package arrives tomorrow, instalment by instalment, presumably as the authors are writing it. When the handbook is finally assembled, there is the further inconvenience (or benefit) of annual updating by subscription. *Treatment* is the third in this series.

For an initial cost of over £36, we are offered a reference work "for general practitioners and others concerned to have information on drugs and the treatment of disease". This work must be set against such classics as the *British National Formulary* and Martindale with regard to information about drugs and against standard textbooks and current articles with regard to management and treatment of specific medical problems.

There is no attempt to discuss the actions of classes of drugs, or their individual pharmacokinetics. No references are given. Information about particular drugs is terse and sketchy, reminiscent of students' aids. The lists of equivalent proprietary preparations are useful, also the setting out of their comparative costs.

The section on Treatment in General Practice lacks the freshness of approach of *Practice*. Topics chosen each represent one man's viewpoint and yet a strongly authoritarian style is sensed throughout. Again, no references are offered.

There was no index in my copy.

Searching for particular information was tedious and irritating notwithstanding the fact that only the first two instalments were available to me. I do not like the neologism 'overview' which precedes several topics. Some of the views expressed are quaint to say the least—for instance, on the management of vertigo: "Education about posture and movement will be required"; on the management of Parkinsonism: "The patient will require simple supportive psychotherapy from his general practitioner"; on sore throat: "A throat paint containing iodine . . . may help in troublesome cases".

My feeling is that this work is overpriced and overambitious in its attempt to be all things to all men. Personally I should not welcome it in our practice library.

COLIN WATERS

PRICE'S TEXTBOOK OF THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE 12TH EDITION

Sir Ronald Bodley Scott (Ed.)

Oxford University Press
Oxford (1978)

1,495 pages. Price £25

As a vocational trainee, I expect that my use of textbooks of general medicine will be infrequent once I have become established in general practice. I shall expect the resource book that I choose both to supply information on 'small print' medicine and to cover the deficiencies in my more basic medical knowledge. This new edition of Price's all-British *Textbook* will certainly be the book that I shall head for in the postgraduate centre library and I would be delighted if my partnership of the future could afford to install a copy in the practice premises. Whilst a bit unwieldy, it is well produced and clearly printed. At £25 it represents a better buy than its popular, slightly cheaper, alternative—a three-year subscription to the monthly series *Medicine*.

Whilst whole-heartedly recommending its use as a reference book for general practitioners, I think it has certain shortcomings as a textbook. In particular, there is little information about patient behaviour (for example, compliance in medication) and, predictably, the doctor-patient relationship is not discussed.

I wonder whether contributions to medical knowledge made by general practitioners have been overlooked—the section on the Pill does not mention the RCGP report—and it is noteworthy

that none of the 2,500 references are to articles published in this *Journal* during the last 20 years.

Apart from this, its claim as being comprehensive and up to date is justified—Legionnaires' disease, urethral syndrome, CAT scanning, PUVA, and irritable bowels all get a mention, though some of these are difficult to trace from the index.

P. SELLEY

THE TREATMENT OF HYPERTENSION

E. D. Freis (Ed.)

MTP Press Limited
Lancaster, England (1978)

164 pages. Price £8.95

Most of us probably know enough about the drug treatment of hypertension to pass muster. Even though we entered medicine before the late 1960s when the treatment of symptomatic hypertension became accepted, the pharmaceutical industry have ensured that we are aware of the available drugs. What, perhaps, many of us do not have is a wider grasp of the pharmacology necessary for controlling that annoying group of more resistant cases and a fuller awareness of the problems of 'patient compliance'.

This succinct and most readable book gives the views of seven contributors, four from America and the others from Norway, Italy, and Australia. The revolution in the approach to hypertension has caused a move away from the expensive search for curable causes, which exist in only five per cent of cases, to the more effective treatment of the many. No homage is paid to general practice, which pioneered this approach, but it is refreshing to find a super-specialist who believes only clinical and urine examination and a chest x-ray to be essential investigations.

The chapter on compliance is the most valuable. Non-compliance of up to 50 per cent of some groups is attributed to long clinic waiting times, complicated treatment schedules, side-effects, poor follow-up, and a poor or non-existent doctor/patient relationship. The importance of a continuing relationship with one doctor is stressed and the success of the paramedical worker is related to the continuity involved.

If readers can ignore the transatlantic spelling of frusemide, bethanidine and clonidine they will enjoy reading this book. It certainly deserves a place in the postgraduate centre library.

MALCOLM AYLETT