

otically detailed account of developmental milestones. For example a toddler (up to three years) “. . . runs away when called, shrieks and grizzles when you want quiet, especially when you telephone, wants a pink mug when you give the red . . .” Discipline and “Behaviour which bugs you” are given an airing and there are a couple of pages on “When you hit too hard”, which describe danger feelings towards the child and how to counter them. It is a pleasure for those with daughters to find whole sections written about little girls, and throughout the book the illustrations confirm that the text is written with real live children in mind.

From the general practitioner's point of view, a section dealing with a few common things such as diarrhoea, or scotching old wives' tales such as “kids catch cold in the cold”, would have enhanced the book's value. Unfortunately the parents of the “won't eat, won't sleep” brigade tend not to read books, but if they are going to read anything this is the one for them.

The author should take it as a considerable compliment that my review copy is going straight into the practice waiting room.

S. A. HALL

MODERN MEDICINE. A TEXTBOOK FOR STUDENTS. 2ND EDITION

Alan E. Read, D. W. Barrett and R. Langton-Hewer

Pitman Medical
Tunbridge Wells (1979)
633 pages. Price £14.95

This textbook is refreshing in its approach to general medicine and I certainly wish it had existed in my student days. The excellent use of tables and diagrams is attractive and stimulating and helps to combat the disincentive of pages of solid print common to most general textbooks.

The common ground work of general medicine is systematically covered with contributions by recognized specialists in each discipline. There is even coverage of the elements of tropical disease and parasitology and an excellent chapter on chronic disease and disability.

There is no doubt that the book will be well received by the students for whom it is intended, but I am less certain of its usefulness to the established general practitioner or trainee. It is inevitably hospital orientated and contains little that is useful to primary

care physicians except, perhaps, for occasional quick reference purposes.

A. P. KRATKY

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1978 OF THE MEDICINES COMMISSION

A notable section in this year's *Annual Report* of the Medicines Commission, contained in appendix three, is on product liability. It concludes: “The Medicines Commission has serious reservations about the practicality of applying the concept of product liability to medicines without there being extensive further consultation.”

D. J. PEREIRA GRAY

A SYNOPSIS OF CARDIOLOGY

S. C. Jordan

John Wright and Sons
Bristol (1979)

335 pages. Price £7.75

General practitioners do not often buy textbooks and therefore few textbooks are aimed specifically at the general practitioner market. This book, appearing 15 years after its last edition, claims to be directed at undergraduate and postgraduate students. ‘Postgraduate students’ should really include all doctors, at whatever stage of their medical careers, but this book seems to be aimed at students in its narrowest sense—that is, someone intending to take an examination.

For a doctor planning to take a diploma or test involving questions on cardiology, then undoubtedly *A Synopsis of Cardiology* should prove useful. It gives countless lists under every subject heading—lists of symptoms, signs, drugs, treatments, techniques, indications, investigations, and so on. This dogmatic way of presenting facts is accentuated by the almost complete lack of references. In a modern textbook aimed at anyone but the reader ‘cramming’ for a multiple choice examination, it is just not good enough to say, for example, that beta-blockers may offer some protective effect after myocardial infarction without discussing theories of action or what the actual evidence is. There are also some serious omissions; for instance, no mention is made of the risk of the sudden withdrawal of beta-blockers.

If I seem unfair in making these criticisms of a book that claims to be only a

synopsis, it is because I feel that such a synopsis has no place in the library of a general practitioner who needs a clear guide around the maze of modern cardiology.

DAVID HASLAM

EVALUATING PRIMARY CARE

E. Clark and J. Forbes

Croom Helm
London (1979)

235 pages. Price £10.95

Southampton Medical School has always been unique in the emphasis it places on general practice in its teaching and research programme. Unique also is Alder Moor Health Centre, the home of the university practice: its teaching and research facilities are apparently unequalled. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that a unique programme should have been set up to study diseases which are predominantly the responsibility of general practitioners, to investigate different methods of providing primary health care, and to define and audit high quality care in general practice.

The working model adopted was McKeown's; age-specific care by a team of general practitioner ‘specialists’, comprising one paediatrician, two ‘mediatricians’, and a geriatrician, with a psychiatrist added later. Patients were actively discouraged from seeing other than the doctor specializing in their particular age group. There was, however, some freedom allowed during holidays.

From the start, the record and information systems had to be completely redesigned. Old notes were converted to a problem-orientated format in A4 folders. An extremely ambitious and somewhat costly computer programme was created, in order to store and analyse the wealth of data deemed to be necessary in the pursuit of their research.

What were the conclusions? Has it all been worth it? Without a doubt this is the bravest attempt so far to apply a strict system of audit in general practice, albeit of an atypical kind. The first hundred pages describe the system and the reasoning behind it. Computer buffs will relish a beautifully concise description of the CLINICS programme, which we are told can be used, without the computer, by any practice concerned about its standards and dynamics of care.

Fifty pages follow of material from the CLINICS programme—aspects of the care of patients with sore throat, hypertension, and psychogenic illness.