

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.

A mass of statistics and tables are provided, which show that different doctors have different habits, and different age groups make different demands. I was left, however, with a considerable feeling of anticlimax that such a sophisticated enterprise should produce so little in the way of really valuable conclusions.

I found the final section the most fascinating and useful. Here readers will find the nitty-gritty, the statistically unadorned subjective impressions of three doctors who have worked the system. We read that McKeownism does not work, at least not with the rather smaller numbers of doctors and patients at Alderminster. It was abandoned, but not, interestingly enough, because of anything the computer produced; rather, the system was found to be too full of annoying snags to operate to everyone's satisfaction.

The two authors end by offering their own recipes for the ideal primary care system. Although worth consideration, I cannot see them ever being adopted; they are just too unlike the system we have already.

This is a serious, readable book. It should be read by those concerned with audit, teaching, and research in general practice.

TIM PAINE

THERAPEUTIC SYSTEMS— PATTERN-SPECIFIC DRUG DELIVERY: CONCEPT AND DEVELOPMENT

Klaus Heilmann

*Year Book Medical Publishers,
London (1979)*

143 pages. Price £11.50

In the past 10 years the prescribing of drugs has become more complex and more difficult. Researchers and prescribers have had to turn their attention to questions of patient compliance, drug reaction and interaction, and problems of availability absorption and excretion. These issues are the result of the increased potency and specificity of the drugs available.

More recently pharmacologists have begun to turn their attention to new methods of delivering drugs to the body and this book is about such systems.

The idea behind being able to direct a single drug to a single target is not a new one. Ehrlich wrote of "the magic bullet" three quarters of a century ago and there have been some remarkable successes since then but some equally

remarkable tragedies in which the general or unexpected action of the drug upon another target has predominated. There can be no doubt about the importance of the topic: the possibility of being able to deliver dopamine via an implanted gadget to just that area of the brain that needs it for the treatment of Parkinson's disease, or insulin in an injection once a week, is exciting.

In this book, translated from the German, Klaus Heilmann explores the ways in which more effective use of the drugs we already have can make a contribution. Being an ophthalmologist it is natural that he should pay most attention to drugs affecting the eye. The tiny, flexible, transparent plaque lodged in the conjunctival sac delivering a steady dose of pilocarpine for glaucoma or drugs for trachoma or dendritic ulcers is one method he describes. But he has not neglected others, and the comfortable IUCD with low incidence of bleeding or extrusion, delivering progesterone for a year is another. It is now theoretically possible to embed a tiny pump, worked by osmosis, under the skin to deliver drugs at constant levels for weeks on end, or to administer chemotherapeutic drugs intravenously and continuously. These may sound like 1984 possibilities but for a patient with malignant disease it could be life saving.

Therapeutic Systems is not a book the general practitioner will want to buy but if he sees it in his postgraduate library he should read it to find out what will be happening at one of the medical frontiers during the next few decades.

V. W. M. DRURY

THE REMOVAL OF CADAVERIC ORGANS FOR TRANSPLANTATION

*Working Party on behalf of the
Health Departments of Great
Britain and Northern Ireland*

*London: Department of Health &
Social Security (1979)*

36 pages.

A Code of Practice for the removal of cadaveric organs for transplantation has recently been drawn up by a working party chaired by Lord Smith of Marlow (Past President of the Royal College of Surgeons, London). It deals with the legal issues involved, the procedure for approaching relatives (mentioning that the family doctor *may* be the best qualified person to make this

approach), premortem treatment, tests and tissue typing, the diagnosis of death, the removal of organs, and post-mortem treatment, distribution, and transport. There is a separate chapter relating to corneas. The appendices list renal transplant units, corneal grafting units, a transplantation checklist for hospital clinicians concerned, the Human Tissue Act 1961, and the papers produced by the Conference of Royal Colleges and Faculties of the United Kingdom on "Diagnosis of Brain Death".

A general practitioner invited to approach the relatives of a potential donor would be fully informed of the scientific and legal issues involved by a previous perusal of this Code of Practice.

R. M. AITKEN

FOOTWEAR—WHAT TO GET AND WHERE TO GET IT 2nd EDITION

Margery Thornton

*Disabled Living Foundation,
London (1979)*

64 pages. Price £1.00

Not everyone knows that you can obtain single shoes, nor that you can convert a right to left and vice versa, nor that new open-toed shoes are available in various shapes and sizes, nor that there are washable shoes, not to mention special warm shoes. These are some of the facts given in this useful index which also gives detailed information about orthopaedic shoemakers, surgical shoe manufacturers, and firms whose products are suitable for use with callipers. It also offers an astonishing range of general modifications and adaptations which make it useful for group practices and health centre libraries.

The knowledge that the Clothing Adviser of the Disabled Living Foundation is accessible by telephone is a most comforting thought to the general practitioner coping with the day-to-day living problems of the disabled.

E. V. KUENSSBERG

ANTIHYPERTENSIVE DRUGS TODAY

R. N. Brogden (Ed.)

MTP Press, Lancaster (1979)

75 pages. Price £14.95

This joint New Zealand/American work