

**TOPICAL STEROID
TREATMENT FOR ASTHMA
AND RHINITIS**

N. Mygind and T. J. H. Clark

*Baillière Tindall
London (1980)*

188 pages. Price £9.50

As a general practitioner with a number of asthmatics, many of whom owe their lives to longterm steroids, I am constantly grateful for the introduction of inhaled steroids for the treatment of asthma. For some they have been as much a trial as a blessing; for others they have offered a whole new quality of life.

The use of topical steroids in the treatment of asthma, and its cousin, rhinitis, is covered in detail in this beautifully presented book, to which a number of distinguished authors have contributed.

The first few chapters cover physiology, pharmacology, and the history of the use of topical steroids in asthma and rhinitis. The more practical aspects, from the family doctor's point of view, are then discussed, including the important and often forgotten subject of patient education in the use of these drugs, which is considered by Ian Gregg, himself a family doctor. Practical advice on the introduction of topical steroids is given in another chapter; the Brompton diary care for the continuous assessment of the asthmatic warrants consideration, and I was impressed by a beautifully simple flow chart for the treatment of adult asthma.

Whilst I find the book impressive in style and content, I consider it too detailed for the general practitioner, for whom discussion of a few basic principles would suffice. However, it would be a useful addition to any postgraduate library.

L. COLMER

TOWARDS TEAM CARE

*J. H. Barber and
Charlotte R. Kratz (Eds)*

*Churchill Livingstone
Edinburgh, London and New York
(1980)*

156 pages. Price £3.95

This is an interesting little book designed to demonstrate the function of members of the primary care team and highlight some of the problems of members of different professions working together. It consists of four sections.

The first section deals with the prob-

lems of role identification within the primary care team. In some ways it is the most penetrating and thought-provoking section but I found it heavy going. It interprets the primary care team in terms of role theory but is so saturated with sociological jargon that I suspect many readers will pass on rapidly to the next section, which will be a pity.

The second part deals with the training and responsibilities of the different members of the team, or at least some of them. Although the health visitor, district nurse, general practitioner, and social worker are very adequately dealt with the midwife is dismissed in one page, and most of this is a quotation from another paper. The midwife is finding a new role in the community and in many areas is certainly a more integral member of the team than the social worker. While the latter's role is excellently portrayed there is an assumption of a greater degree of co-operation between her and the primary care team than exists in most parts of the country. The administrative staff is dismissed in less than one page.

The third section consists of four case studies in which the potential role of the various members is discussed within the context of a specific problem. These are excellent and remind us that case discussion between the various members is the basis of true co-operation and team care, and that teamwork is more than the transferring of unwanted jobs to someone else.

The final section summarizes the previous parts and makes enlightening predictions and suggestions for the future.

This is a compact but by no means comprehensive book. The format is interesting, and apart from the first section, very readable. It should be on the reading list for all candidates for the MRCGP examination, particularly trainees—course organizers please note.

J. WHEWELL

**THE ECG MADE EASY.
2ND EDITION**

John R. Hampton

*Churchill Livingstone
UK (1980)*

82 pages. Price £1.95

For those with no prior knowledge of ECGs this is an excellent book to start with. In only 80 uncluttered pages the novice is taken through all the common ECG abnormalities by way of the underlying electrophysiology of the heart. A clear diagram of the path of depolarization is followed by the result-

ing ECG tracing, the process often being broken into its component parts. The accompanying text is concise and there is a useful index.

The book itself is a remarkably sturdy and glossy paperback itching to slip into the pocket, which is inappropriate since it represents the minimum knowledge required by an ECG user. For example, it should not be necessary to refer to a flow diagram to differentiate atrial from ventricular fibrillation. In practice ECG diagnosis is by recognition, rather than by derivation.

The book is also aimed at medical students, nurses working in intensive therapy units and ambulance drivers, and this perhaps accounts for some of the over-simplification which occurs, such as the description of tachycardia as fast rhythm. It is also irritating to be told repeatedly that ECGs are easy to understand. However, this is an excellent 'starter' book which would also be of interest to the practice nurse.

S. A. HALL

**1980 YEARBOOK OF
MEDICINE**

*Editors: Rogers, Des Prez, Cline,
Braunwald, Greenberger, Bondy
and Epstein*

*Yearbook Medical Publishers
Chicago and London (1980)*

651 pages. Price £25.50

Aimed principally at the hospital physician, this is a collection of the most important papers published in the world's leading medical journals during the 12 months preceding November 1979. The book is divided into seven separate sections, each under a different editor. The papers in each section are summarized and connected by highly informative, often sparkling, editorial comment. Many papers are too highly specialized to be of value to the general practitioner; there are, however, very useful articles on urinary tract infections, non-streptococcal glomerulonephritis, ischaemic heart disease, cimetidine and colitis for the general practitioner with a medical interest who wishes to do that bit more for his patients. Through reading this book I have found new ideas for the management of some of my more intractable medical problems, and enough gems to keep my consultant colleagues on their toes for the next 12 months. This is not a book for the general practitioner to rush out and buy, but it is well worth borrowing from the local postgraduate medical library.

B. BEDFORD