

curate. It reveals the author's preconceptions about asthma, which is included in a general section on allergic disorders, implying that the underlying abnormality in asthma is of an allergic nature. However, in many patients with asthma there is no evidence of allergic factors. It is unfortunate that the author dismisses skin tests as being of little value. (Incidentally, intradermal skin tests, one of the two methods which are mentioned, are now recognized to be obsolete since they are both unreliable and potentially dangerous.) I would have liked to see a much fuller exposition of reversible and irreversible airflow obstruction and also a description of the use of measurements of peak expiratory flow, by which the doctor can determine which of these components is predominant in a given patient. In the section on tuberculosis it is stated that streptomycin and PAS are part of standard triple chemotherapy. The former now has only a limited place and the latter is obsolete, the two drugs having been replaced by rifampicin and ethambutol.

It was a pleasure to note that nowhere in this book is reference made to those two widely used and thoroughly misleading terms 'bronchospasm' and 'air entry'. It is high time that all other authors abandoned them.

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Reference

Oswald, N. C. & Fry, J. (1962). *Diseases of the Respiratory System*. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications.

SHRIRE'S CLINICAL CARDIOLOGY

E. Chester

John Wright & Sons
Bristol (1981)

344 pages. Price £17.50

This is the fourth edition of a text originally written by Professor Shrire of Capetown, so the previous editions evidently met some need. It is difficult to see what this could have been, except perhaps for preparing for examinations. The current author is Professor of Medicine at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

I read the chapters on history-taking, examination, rheumatic fever, hypertension and hypertensive heart disease, and cor pulmonale. The style is clear but unimaginative. Content is heavily biased toward mechanisms rather than causes,

and the few lines devoted to epidemiological evidence on natural history are glib and inaccurate. Treatment is dealt with so sketchily that it would have been better omitted. Prevention is hardly discussed at all, and certainly not seen as a part of the doctor's remit. The full resources of a teaching hospital are assumed throughout, and there is no discussion of the central problem of applying medical science in the real world of unmet need and limited resource, namely the need for rational priorities. This is a book that need never have been written.

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CARDIOVASCULAR RISK FACTORS IN CHILDREN

Gerald S. Berenson

Oxford University Press
Oxford (1980)

453 pages. Price £20

The Bogalusa Heart Study was set up in 1972 to investigate the early natural history of atherosclerosis and essential hypertension in about 5,000 children aged up to 14 years in the town of Bogalusa, Louisiana. This book is an account of the objectives, methods and results of this study.

The authors describe how the children were recruited into the study and detail the methods used for anthropometric measurements and for recording blood pressure using a number of different techniques; they also describe the laboratory methods used to measure lipid and lipoprotein fractions.

The book is very detailed, with many tables and grids giving percentile levels for all of the variables. However, one of the most interesting findings in this study is the identification of high-risk children who persistently exhibit multiple risk factor variables at high levels.

The authors remind us that if today's children grow up like their parents, 20 to 30 per cent will develop hypertension and about 50 per cent will die from hypertension and atherosclerosis. If it can be shown that high risk is detectable in childhood, we will have to reconsider our strategy for preventing ischaemic heart disease.

Those with an interest in cardiovascular epidemiology will find this book of great value, but it is unlikely to be attractive to the majority of general practitioners.

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ABC OF EAR, NOSE AND THROAT, 51 pages, price £3.50; **ABC OF HYPERTENSION**, 44 pages, price £3.50; **TODAY'S TREATMENT 4**, 178 pages, price £4.50

British Medical Association
London (1981)

It is very difficult to know which doctors are expected to profit from the 'ABC' written by an ENT surgeon (apparently unaided by a general practitioner) when the same page has an illustration of an ice pack placed on the bridge of the nose and another of a surgical approach to the anterior ethmoid artery. The hypertension collection is better, but the subject is well covered in other recent books of reference and revision, to say nothing of the excellent audiovisuals now available. The articles, originally of some value for hints during the week of issue, have not survived well as a booklet.

Today's Treatment 4 collects articles from three other series published in the *BMJ*; these have survived better. The section on anaesthesia is perhaps of marginal value to the general practitioner, but the other two, on drug induced diseases and clinical pharmacology, are interestingly written and informative. We all write thousands of prescriptions every year and clinical pharmacology is an important subject. This book contains some very useful reminders of the disorders, and sometimes disasters, we may cause by drugs. The inevitable conciseness of the excellent new *BNF* is filled out by these articles; it can be recommended to general practitioners as a book to dip into, as a source for presentation of 'Journal Club' items to peer groups, and for use in training. It serves a need well and deserves to go into further editions.

D. J. PRICE
General Practitioner
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New editions

Davies, D. M. (ed.) *Textbook of Adverse Drug Reactions*. 2nd edition. £28.00, hardback. 693 pages.

Garrod, L. P., Lambert, H. P. & O'Grady. *Antibiotic and Chemotherapy*. 5th edition. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. £18.50, hardback. 514 pages.

Hartwig Heyck, H. *Headache and Facial Pain*. First English edition. Chicago: Year Book Medical Publishers. £9.75, paperback. 274 pages.

Myles, M. F. *Textbook for Midwives*. 4th edition. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. £16.00, hardback; £12.00, paperback. 890 pages.