

The concluding chapters discuss how a better understanding of smoking behaviour can assist smoking cessation and the possibility of less hazardous smoking. Evidence of the usefulness of nicotine chewing gum is reviewed, with the conclusion that it is a logical method to use in helping some smokers, especially those consuming large numbers of cigarettes.

This book is an authoritative and readable account of a habit which, on average, kills at least two of every general practitioner's patients every year. It deserves to be widely read.

GODFREY FOWLER  
*Clinical Reader in General Practice,  
University of Oxford*

## PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY OF SLEEP

D. Wheatley (ed.)

Raven Press  
New York (1981)  
246 pages. Price \$39.44

The average general practitioner is likely to see at least 100 new cases of sleep disturbance each year, and have perhaps another 50 patients on regular hypnotics—a moderate problem, but a demanding one for the thoughtful doctor. This collection from a symposium on sleep is therefore important.

Most general practitioners would find the papers far too detailed in terms of pharmacology and physiology, but it is certainly a good source of background information. The chapters on benzodiazepines and pharmacokinetics come from leading researchers in the USA and Holland, and can be strongly recommended. David Wheatley, a general practitioner, has had the onerous task of editing the papers and I feel he could have insisted on clearer conclusions or summaries at the end of each chapter. His own studies of practical somnopharmacology demonstrate that it is quite possible for general practitioners to involve themselves in research in this difficult field, but I was surprised to find the subject of drug dependence hardly mentioned.

Perhaps the ambivalence of some of the articles is expressed in the words of Professor Fahy of Galway: "the scientific basis of hypnotics is not as firmly established as is sometimes suggested".

A. D. CLIFT  
*General Practitioner, Manchester*

## EVALUATION AND CLINICAL MANAGEMENT OF DIZZINESS AND VERTIGO

A. J. Firestone

John Wright  
Bristol (1982)  
218 pages. Price £13.25

The ability to maintain a stable, upright posture depends on the integrity of the vestibular labyrinth, proprioceptive information and vision. Any or all of these systems may produce instability through degenerative disease, and their integration may be compromised in the elderly as a result of ischaemia. The diagnosis of the common complaints of dizziness and vertigo is not always easy, and management can be frustrating, so that one may shy away from it all one's professional life. Yet, like most subjects, the more one considers it, the more likely it is to become interesting, provided that the information source is clear and stimulating, as it is here. Contributions from specialists in physiology, ophthalmology, neurology, speech, ENT, pharmacology, family medicine and psychiatry, set out clearly the wide considerations opened up by disturbance of the sensory function and motor co-ordination. Good editing has ensured that overlap does not occur. The illustrations are helpful and clear, and there is a self-assessment section at the end.

M. K. THOMPSON  
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## IMMUNOLOGICAL AND CLINICAL ASPECTS OF ALLERGY

M. H. Lessof  
MTP Press  
Lancaster (1981)  
443 pages. Price £24.95

Professor Lessof's book is aimed at all postgraduate clinicians involved with allergy—chest physicians, paediatricians, dermatologists and general practitioners. As a general rule any book intended for an audience with such diverse needs is doomed to failure, but it is a measure of Professor Lessof's skill that the book is likely to succeed. There is an introductory section on the basic scientific aspects of allergy and their clinical application. Biological and immunological advances are presented in a balanced way and lead into chapters on

diagnostic tests. There is an excellent chapter on allergy in infancy and childhood and this is followed by detailed chapters on skin allergy, gastro-intestinal reactions, respiratory allergy and allergy in minor target organs such as the eye, ear and kidney. Sections on drugs and hyposensitization therapy complete a really first-class book.

Let it be said at once that this book is detailed in its coverage, painstakingly researched and liberally referenced. However, it is precisely because allergy is such a common problem that the general practitioner requires detailed knowledge of its presentation and management. It has been estimated that 50 per cent of exacerbations of asthma are treated with antibiotics. My only regret is that there is no general practitioner contributor to the book. Nevertheless it can be thoroughly recommended.

D. BROOKS  
*General Practitioner, Manchester*

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## BOOKS FOR PATIENTS

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### ACUPUNCTURE. ITS PLACE IN WESTERN MEDICINE

George Lewith  
Thorsons Publishers Ltd  
Wellingborough (1982)  
127 pages. Price £6.95 hardback,  
£3.95 paperback

Although ostensibly for the lay reader, I hope that many doctors will use this book as an introduction to acupuncture, since amongst a multiplicity of books on the subject, few others seek to explain the ancient Chinese concepts of disease and its treatment within the context of Western medicine.

Those who have never seen acupuncture in practice will find that the illustrations, although poorly reproduced, give a good idea of what to expect. With logical explanations, a practical attitude towards research and a strong sympathy for Chinese culture, Dr Lewith has produced a very readable book which sets a high standard for this new series on alternative therapies.

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