

is published in the College 24 hours later and is posted to examiners, faculties, regional advisers, postgraduate deans and the press. It also now appears on Meditel.

Unsuccessful candidates are invited to write to the Chairman of the Membership Division if they wish for details of their performance. The majority do so, and whenever possible are given more specific advice if they intend to resit the examination. Finally, candidate and examination data are analysed to provide regional statistics which allow the College, the faculties and regional advisers an overview of the role of the examination in the assessment of vocational and continuing education in general practice.

The future

Each of the components of the present examination is the responsibility of a working group of the Panel of Examiners who continually analyse and develop their methods. The reduction in the number of multiple choice questions from 90 to 60 is the result of an appraisal of the efficiency of this particular method in the assessment of factual recall. The use of videotape techniques in peer appraisal and self appraisal of oral examination methods is increasing the effectiveness of these particular procedures, and TEQ and MEQ papers are being similarly reviewed.

The Membership Division and the Panel of Examiners have been conscious for some time of the disadvantages of an assessment procedure which takes place at the end of vocational training and which is, therefore, of limited educational value to the individual candidate. A working party is therefore exploring methods of assessment of relevance to the midpoint of vocational training which will primarily be of educational value to the candidate and his trainer and which might be seen as an appropriate preliminary assessment, guiding the candidate in his preparation for a later membership examination.

Equally the assumption that success in the membership examination predicts subsequent satisfactory performance in general practice requires exploration. Studies of the predictive validity of the examination are therefore being organized and it is the intention of the Membership Division and the Panel of Examiners that their activities will continue to be central to the major purpose of the College, which is to raise the standard of patient care in general practice.

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GENERAL PRACTICE LITERATURE

BOOK REVIEWS

CLINICAL REACTIONS TO FOOD

M. H. Lessof (editor)

Wiley, Chichester (1983)
222 pages. Price £14.50

A fascinating attempt to distill the cool facts from the present hot soup of fashions, fancies and fads about food allergies. The title itself avoids the use of the word allergy and several of the contributors to this book (edited by the Professor of Medicine at Guy's Hospital Medical School) are at pains to decide the nature of food intolerance and point out that true allergy is likely to be rare. The chapter by Barnetson and Lessof and another by Ferguson and Strobel are particularly helpful in clarifying the current state of knowledge about reactions to food and the immunological

and physiological complexities of digestion.

All who are interested in food intolerance and food allergy will welcome this well-balanced appraisal of the current state of knowledge in this controversial field.

E.G.B.

BOOKS RECEIVED

PRACTICE OF PSYCHOSEXUAL MEDICINE, Katherine Draper (editor), John Libbey, London, 1983. 257 pages. Price £14.95.

ABC of HEALTHY TRAVEL, Eric Walker and Glyn Williams, British Medical Association, London, 1983. 39 Pages. Price £3.50 (paperback).

TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT IN ADULT PSYCHIATRY, G. E. Berrios and J. H. Dowson, (editors), Bailliere Tindall, London, 1983. 502 pages. Price £18.50

ENDOCRINOLOGY, Harold E. Carlson, (editor), John Wiley and Sons Ltd, Chichester, 1983. 308 pages. Price £31.15

LECTURE NOTES ON EPIDEMIOLOGY AND COMMUNITY MEDICINE (2nd edition), R. D. T. Farmer and D. L. Miller, Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford, 1983. 214 pages. Price £6.80.

FAMILY MEDICINE for students and teachers. R. T. Mossop and G S Fehrsen, *Academica*, Cape Town, 1983. 123 pages.

1983 USP DI DRUG INFORMATION FOR THE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER, C. V. Mosby, London, 1983. 982 pages. Price £22.50 (hardback).

PROBLEMS IN PERIPHERAL VASCULAR DISEASE, P. E. A. Savage, MTP Press, Lancaster, 1983. 118 pages. Price £7.95.

THE FAMILY PHYSICIAN, Kupat-Holim Health Insurance Institution of the General Federation of Labour in Israel, 258 pages.

THE NEW GOOD BIRTH GUIDE, Sheila Kitzinger, Penguin Handbooks, Middlesex, 1983. 443 pages. Price £3.95 (paperback).

COMMUNITY MEDICINE, A Textbook for Nurses and Health Visitors, W. E. Waters and K. S. Cliff, Croom Helm Ltd, Kent, 1983. 146 pages. Price £6.95.

LARYNGECTOMY, Diagnosis to Rehabilitation, Yvonne Edels (editor), Croom Helm, Kent, 1983. 309 pages. Price £18.95.

COMMUNITY HEALTH, June Clark and Jill Henderson (editors), Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, 1983. 317 pages. Price £6.95 (paperback).