Books received

**Bone and Joint Diseases.** Articles published in the *British Medical Journal.* Pp. 131, soft cover, illustrated. London: British Medical Association, 1977. Inland £3.00; Abroad US $6.00 incl. postage.

**Cell, Tissue and Disease. The Basis of Pathology.** By NEVILLE WOOLF. Pp. 248 + viii, soft cover, illustrated. London: Baillière Tindall, 1977. £2.95.

**A Colour Atlas of Cardiac Pathology.** By GEOFFREY FARRER-BROWN. Pp. 159, hard cover, illustrated. London: Wolfe Medical Publications Ltd, 1977. £13.00.

**A Colour Atlas of Histological Staining Techniques.** Wolfe Medical Atlases - 18. By A. SMITH and J. BRUTON. Pp. 192, hard cover, illustrated. London: Wolfe Medical Publications, 1977. £5.00.

**Fundamentals of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Vol. 1. Obstetrics.** By DEREK LLEWELLYN-JONES. Pp. 471, hard and soft cover, illustrated. London: Faber & Faber. Hard cover £12.00. Soft cover £9.75.

**Haemostasis. British Medical Bulletin:** Vol. 33, No. 3, September 1977. Introduction by Professor R. G. MACFARLANE. Soft cover, illustrated. London: The British Council Medical Department, 1977. UK £4.50. Other countries £5.00.

**Hypoxia and Ischaemia. The Proceedings of a Symposium Organized by The Royal College of Pathologists.** Pp. 190, soft cover, illustrated. London: Royal College of Pathologists, 1977. Inland £5.00. Abroad US $10.00 incl. postage.

**Immunology Simplified.** By T. R. BOWRY. Pp. 10.24 + A.10 + g.16 + SA7 + 1.4, soft cover, illustrated. Nairobi: African Medical and Research Foundation, 1977. K.sh. 30/- (approx. £2.00 stg) + postage.

**Motor Neurone Disease.** Ed. by F. CLIFFORD ROSE. Pp. 147, hard cover, illustrated. Tunbridge Wells: Pitman Medical, 1977. £7.00.

**Our Endangered Hearing.** By RICHARD CARMEN. Pp. 193 + iv, hard cover. Emmaus, Pasadena: Rochdale Press, 1977. £4.95.

**Shaw's Textbook of Operative Gynaecology (4th edn):** Revised by JOHN HOWKIN and CHRISTOPHER N. HUDSON. Pp. 547, hard cover, illustrated. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1977. £35.00.

Book reviews

**Colour Atlas of Gynaecological Cytopathology**

By CHANDRA GRUBB. Pp. 72, hard cover, illustrated. Aylesbury: HM + M Publishers, 1977. £15.00.

This Atlas is a collection of 318 colour photomicrographs arranged in sections illustrating normal appearances, non-malignant conditions, pre-invasive and invasive carcinoma and miscellaneous conditions including radiation effects, rare lesions, areas of confusion and artefacts. Each section is preceded by a brief but clear text and each illustration has a descriptive caption.

A most helpful feature is the inclusion of photomicrographs of histological preparations to correlate with the cytopathological, although a few of these are not quite as informative as they might be. The sections dealing with appearances which can be confused and with artefacts are particularly useful but it is a pity that changes associated with oral contraception and pregnancy are not dealt with.

In the section on flora and fauna there is no indication as to which are normal and which are pathological and cocci and bacilli which are commonly seen are not illustrated. A few of the photographs accompanied by oil immersion views of the same field could have been omitted but otherwise are well chosen, generally of high quality, and, despite a rather varied colour scheme, illustrate the subject matter clearly.

Dr Grubb's expertise and experience in teaching are clearly evident in this volume and she is to be congratulated on producing a most attractive book which will be of value to students of cytology and practising histologists and cytopathologists alike.

**Multiple Choice (Objective) Questions in Pharmacology**

By ROGER A. LEWIS. Pp. 143 + xv, soft cover. London: Baillière Tindall, 1976. £2.20.

In his preface, the author expresses a somewhat optimistic case for the use of multiple choice questions (MCQs). The reviewer would have thought it prudent to balance this by adding that a MCQ paper could form one of the component parts of any vital, professional examination in Pharmacology, e.g. in Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Studies or Pharmacy, so indicating that MCQs provide an additional technique of testing certain candidates who may not be fully at ease with the essay type question paper or with the oral examinations. Thus MCQs give a candidate a chance beyond the conventional essay and oral tests to be examined in a third way.

This reviewer is of the opinion that MCQs alone can form a constructive method of monitoring student progress as a course in pharmacology or clinical pharmacology proceeds. They also train the student in this technique which usually has to be acquired.

The main advantage of MCQs is that they may be machine-marked, thus easing the Examiners' burden in that taxing period between the candidate answering the written papers and the oral tests. This offsets to some extent the heavy expenditure of time required, first for setting and then for testing of MCQs by examiners as well as by students.

The form of Professor Lewis's book is a single page of Preface (which contains a reference which does not accord with that in the bibliography). He then devotes three pages of Introduction to the background of MCQs, the types of questions, to the percentage of correct answers after random guesses with each type and the manner of marking. This should be of interest to those unfamiliar with MCQs. A page of directions for students and another for examiners ushering in the Sections of the book covering, I General Pharmacology, drug metabolism and autocoids; II Drugs affecting the autonomic nervous system; III Central nervous system; IV Other systems; V Endocrine systems; VI Chemotherapy of bacterial and fungal infections; VII Chemotherapy of parasitic and neoplastic diseases; VIII General pharmacology including drug interactions and toxicology. Then follow the correct answers, percentage facility (i.e. percentage giving correct...
reply) and percentage discrimination (i.e. difference in facility between top and fourth quartile of students).

Each of the eight Sections is subdivided so as to offer a choice of MCQs of the following types: A, True or false questions (if true, are the clauses related?); B, The most appropriate statement (to be selected from four choices); C, Comparative questions; D, All appropriate statements from 0 to 4 may be correct and E, Matching questions. The directions to students are of assistance but the paragraph on comparative statements, even when taken in conjunction with the comparative MCQs and the answers, could lead to residual uncertainty.

As there are various types of MCQs, the author has given groups of each type within each Section. The type of MCQ used by Teachers and Examiners tends to crystallize into one or two types so that the other three types might be of little relevance to many students. The shortcoming of the laudable attempt to be all-embracing is that the numbers of examples of MCQs of each type are limited to about 150 MCQs. Most candidates can answer up to 60 MCQs comfortably in one hour. If examples of MCQ are required in one or more types, then the book can provide them, but it is tempting to enquire whether the number offered in each type is adequate.

It is very easy to criticize MCQs, it is very much harder to compose MCQs and to assess critically the products of one's composition. Therefore we can be grateful to Professor Lewis for tackling the task. This book should stimulate student understanding of and interest in MCQ techniques. As MCQs seem to have become an established feature of the examination scene, no student sitting examinations with MCQs can afford to be less well prepared and this book offers help in this direction.

Multiple Sclerosis: British Medical Bulletin, Vol. 33, No. 1

Pp. 85 + xiv, soft cover, illustrated. London: The British Council, Medical Department, 65 Davies Street, 1977. £4.50 UK. £5.00 Other countries.

This up-to-date review of current knowledge on multiple sclerosis deals with its pathology, epidemiology, clinical features, laboratory diagnosis and management. The relevance of viral antibody studies, histocompatibility antigens, fatty acids, cellular immunity and humoral factors are discussed by experts in the respective fields. None of the fourteen contributions is more than seven pages long and the whole, edited by J. S. Porterfield, will be invaluable as well as of considerable interest both to clinicians and research workers in this field.

Multiple sclerosis. A critical conspectus

Edited by E. J. Field. Pp. 265, hardback, illustrated. Lancaster: MTP Press, 1977. £9.95.

Professor Field has brought together a number of scientists concerned with research into multiple sclerosis and has succeeded in editing an excellent book on the subject. Although almost half of it is composed of two chapters on epidemiology, the authors Alter and Kurtzke have succeeded in avoiding significant overlap. Kurtzke's chapter is of considerable interest in its review of the pitfalls of data collection. In the remaining half of the book, Fog deals with the clinical aspects of the disease, Carp and his associates with the significance of the recent viral studies, Smith and Thompson with those on lipids and Carnegie and Sims with proteins and enzymes. Changes in the CSF are discussed by Lowenthal. Field himself contributes the introductory chapter and in the final one discusses the significance of the tests for the disease which he has been instrumental in devising and which have given rise to a certain amount of controversy.

Operative Obstetrics (9th Edn)

By P. R. Myerscough. Pp. 882 + ix, hard cover, illustrated. London: Baillière Tindall, 1977. £15.00 cased.

This is the ninth edition of a great book, going back over seventy years. Munro Kerr started it, Chassar Moir continued it and Philip Myerscough has been an editor since 1971. It is a very personal volume, depending heavily on the practice of these three men and so must be a very reassuring book to have beside one when in trouble. It presents a wide survey of the operative management of paranormal obstetrics. Parts of it seem like another world to the obstetrician of the late 1970s working in the United Kingdom, but there are still large areas of the world where a volume like this would be invaluable to the single-handed obstetrician meeting a condition for the first time and having limited facilities with which to deal with it. Dr Myerscough has retained the personal style of his previous senior authors including many anecdotal accounts of cases dealt with in the past.

Accepting this, the book does tend to hark back and the references quoted have the look of a vintage port list rather than one of usual everyday wines; there is a distinct skew to the left. For instance, in the references associated with the diagnosis of pelvic deformity, all but two are pre-1970 and many of the references to the management of breech delivery are from World War II or before; there have been many more modern references which deserve recommendation. This is a matter of judgment for it is very difficult to follow great men of the past and not acknowledge what they have done. If, however, in the next edition, this could be edited to a slightly wider acceptance of obstetrics in the last twenty years, it would make the book more in line with what happens in the labour wards of the United Kingdom in the 1970s and we hope the 1980s.

The book is thoroughly recommended to all who practise obstetrics. It will teach us all something, for the authors draw on a wealth of practice which between the three of them spans a century of work. Operative Obstetrics is an essential for all medical libraries and should certainly be on the shelf of any obstetrician who may find himself not working in the safer surroundings of the home labour wards and who may have to resort to a variety of vaginal procedures for which his Western training had not fitted him.