BOOK REVIEWS

GYNECOLOGIC CYTOPATHOLOGY. By Marie L. Schneider and H-J, Staemmler. Pp. xii+187; figs 154; tables 6. £24.50. Eastbourne: Holt-Saunders, 1978.

THIS is an English edition of an atlas first published in Germany and the very readable style of the text is a tribute to both the translator and the authors. The book deals with the diagnosis of the important lesions in gynaecological cytology and with the cellular changes which give rise to diagnostic confusion. Following a chapter on basic cytology there are others dealing with inflammatory and reparative changes in the cervix, as well as dysplasias and malignant lesions. The cytology of endometrial lesions is also covered and there is a section on the rarer gynaecological malignancies.

Each chapter begins with a concise account of the salient cytological features with emphasis on differential diagnosis. This is followed by a series of photomicrographs each of which is accompanied by a schematic drawing which emphasises its main features and also by a legend on the facing page. In all, there are 154 photomicrographs which are generally of a high quality and of good size.

This atlas can be strongly recommended for trainees in Cytopathology. It is concise and clear in its presentation and when used in association with a general text-book it should be readily understood by a beginner in the subject. The only drawback of the book is its price which reflects the high cost of colour reproduction. This is likely to restrict its use to departmental libraries where it should prove a real asset.

J.H.R.

REGIONAL ANATOMY – MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT. By T. R. Murphy. (Pp. 158. £3.50). London: Lloyd-Luke (Medical Books) Ltd., 1978.

THIS useful book has multiple choice questions on the topographical anatomy of the head and neck and the abdomen (each with 80 questions). Five questions with 5 parts each are written on a left hand page and there is a response grid for convenient marking on the corresponding right hand page. A good 2nd M.B. or Primary F.R.C.S. standard is required to answer correctly.

Training in the technique is essential for success in multiple choice examinations. Complete understanding of the question and concentration are necessary requirements as well as a sound knowledge of the subject. This book provides this training and is highly recommended as especially suitable for those doctors about to take the Primary F.R.C.S. examination. Short sections of questions on neuroanatomy and clinical embryology would enhance the book’s usefulness.

T.J.H.

A SHORT TEXTBOOK OF MEDICAL MICROBIOLOGY. By D. C. Turk and I. A. Porter. Fourth Edition. (Paper £3.45, board £6.45). London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1978.

THIS edition is an improvement on its predecessors which have obviously survived in the popularity table of small texts on microbiology. However, the improved type face has not been accompanied by elimination of irritating typographical errors; proof-reading has been
lightly undertaken! Imbalances in presentation are exemplified by the treatment of Bacteroides (just a half-page) whilst Myco leprae fills more than two pages. On p.315 the multiple pressure method of smallpox vaccination is said to be a special procedure!

On p.47 the brief paragraph on 'Droplets' frightens the reviewer - it is non-informed and tells the reader nothing of significance of large droplets compared with droplet nuclei; this entire chapter (of four pages) must be re-written. This volume cannot be recommended to my students.

R.R.G.

PATIENTS, PRACTITIONERS AND MEDICAL CARE. ASPECTS OF MEDICAL SOCIOLOGY. Second Edition. (Pp. xiv+185. £3.25). London: William Heinemann Medical Books, 1978.

THIS book is written in a practical style, is short and free of 'sociological' jargon. The author, a medical sociologist, describes the social setting of medicine. His aim is to indicate something of the sociologist's role in predicting illness behaviour and to define his relationships with other workers in the field. The family doctor may find it more interesting and relevant to his everyday work than the hospital clinician, because of the heavy social and behavioural content.

Social action and illness behaviour in different clinical situations are discussed. The author defines man as a 'social' as well as a 'biological' animal, and stresses the importance of understanding his social and cultural background. The chapter of greatest value is that concerned with symptom perception by different socio-economic groups and the process of becoming ill, which includes a description of 'sick-role'.

The chapter on the relationship of doctor and patient presents numerous deficiencies in communication and has wide implications for medical education. Doctors are apparently inept at handling uncertainty and they adopt varying strategies. Some see illness in narrow scientific and procedural terms, other see emotional and social issues as the very essence of medical care.

The 'Hospital' chapter is complex and full of 'organisational theories and goals' of some interest to a medical administrator, but less so to a clinician. It does however show the growing complexities of interpersonal relationships between different interdependent social groups in large hospitals.

It is evident that the author has practical experience of applying sociological concepts to help solve clinical problems. Hence among the books available on medical sociology this second edition offers good value for money. It is very readable and to the point and should be read with interest by medical students, and in particular primary care physicians and other health workers.

W.G.

NEUROPHYSIOLOGY OF POSTURAL MECHANISMS. By T. D. M. Roberts, B.SC., PH.D., F.R.S.E. Second Edition. (Pp. 415; figs. 173. £30.00). London-Boston: Butterworths, 1978.

THE physiology of the nervous system is very complex but additional information is being provided regularly and we can expect a better understanding to come with time. At the moment the physiology of many simple reflex systems has been quite fully elucidated and can be comprehended without much difficulty. At the other extreme there is the cortical activity concerned with voluntary activity, appreciation of sensation, etc., which can not be