

are largely unchanged. There is an excellent glossary of common medical terms at the end, many of which must cause considerable confusion to new students; future additions might benefit from some normal biochemical and haematological values, as many of these are relevant to radiographic practice.

This book contains much useful information, but is not the easiest book to use. The order of the chapters seems somewhat illogical, although a good index somewhat compensates for this. The note-form style of presentation makes some entries rather brief, although does enable a very large amount of information to be contained in what is almost a pocket-sized book. It can be recommended to all student radiographers, both therapeutic and diagnostic, and at under £9 it should be possible for each student to have their own copy that can be freely annotated.

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Current Issues in Cancer, edited by G.M. Mead. Pp. x + 140, illustrated. British Medical Journal, London, 1992. Paperback £9.95.

This book brings together under one cover a series of previously published articles on a variety of subjects from an impressive oncological authorship. As well as chapters relating to specific tumour types, encompassing some of the rarer, more treatable malignancies as well as the commoner cancers, there are chapters covering radiotherapy, genetics, biological therapy and quality of life. Taken together they provide a most useful and readable commonsense view of oncological practice, of value to non-oncologists and oncologists alike. There can be few volumes requiring so modest an investment that provide such a wealth of information and the bookshelf of anyone with even a passing interest in cancer should not be seen without it.

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Aids to Obstetrics and Gynaecology for M.R.C.O.G., third edition, G.M. Stirrat. Pp. 306, not illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, New York, Melbourne, Tokyo, 1991. Paperback £10.95.

This third edition in 11 years of a handy-sized paperback revisionary text will be welcomed by M.R.C.O.G.-seeking postgraduates as a synopsis of the examination database. The presentation in clear and explicit terms will assist the uncertain candidate. The absence of discussion of alternative opinion or the source material for some controversial views does not help the young surgeon preparing for the examination to consider a different approach or to develop opinions, so necessary in postgraduate studies. Perhaps this is inevitable in so condensed a text.

The 292 pages are disproportionately allocated, favouring obstetrics to gynaecology in a ratio of four to three. Some changes have been introduced, expanding the material and updating the references. The introductory chapter and that concerned with congenital abnormalities have been greatly fleshed out and the latter includes a useful section dealing with genetic counselling. Definitions are very clear. A few typographical errors are noted. Adnexa in the plural should read adnexa.

It is not only pocket sized for easy reference, but at £10.95 it represents value for money. There is a useful place for this book which fills a niche in the final revisionary reading for the postgraduate student approaching the M.R.C.O.G. examination. It should not be seen as a substitute for serious study of texts and journals to develop the discretionary skills in preparing for the M.R.C.O.G. examination.

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Annual Review of Microbiology, edited by Ornston, Balows and Greenberg. Pp. ix + 757, illustrated. Annual Review Inc, California, 1992. Hardback £25.00.

Microbiology means different things to different people. In the USA it means the detailed study of microorganisms, without necessary relevance to the patient. It is not the study of infectious disease and the science of microbiology is pursued largely by non-medical researchers remote from the patient. It is not surprising that the all-American edited *Annual Review of Microbiology*, whilst extending our deep knowledge of micro-organisms, is only of peripheral interest for most practising doctors.

But medical microbiologists will find some of it interesting, novel and depressing. Depressing, because of the clear evidence that the UK is lagging and limping increasingly behind our American mentors. There are chapters of campylobacter, helicobacter, hepatitis delta virus, penicillin and cephalosporin biosynthetic genes, HIV infection and the central nervous system, and treating the picornavirus. The book also encompasses agriculture such as nodulation of legumes, but I challenge anyone to comprehend the chapter 'Autoregulatory factors and communication in Actinomycetes' despite the good English by the Japanese authors. Indeed every chapter is written well, comprehensively referenced and presents an up-to-date review of the subject. Perhaps my not infrequent reaction to all this information being 'so-what' suggests a cognitive defect in the reviewer, rather than the consequences of pursuing small-print bioscience for its own sake? The text extends to over 700 pages and would be good value, but for that only a few of the 24 chapters are relevant to any one researcher. Perhaps a good book for the library?

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