BOOK REVIEWS

Accidents and Emergencies, 5th edn

by R. HARDY and J. BACHE

OUP, Oxford, 1987. 395pp. £12.50.

This book, as the author points out, is a basic guide to Casualty work and within these guidelines it works very well. There are areas where the information provided is scanty, in particular the management of dislocations, fractures and soft tissue joint injuries—but the local received wisdom can always be added by the reader. Whether one needs alternate blank pages for this additional information is doubtful and this format appears to be a waste of space.

There are a few minor points at which I was surprised:

the suggestion that Femoral Nerve Block is standard analgesia for fractured neck of femur.

the omission of a precordial thump in the cardiac arrest protocol.

the omission of a priority chest X-Ray in the management of multiple injuries.

These minor quibbles aside, I would thoroughly recommend this publication as a basic handbook.

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Atlas of Paramedic Skills

By BRYAN E. BLEDSOE

Prentice Hall Inc., New Jersey, USA. 254pp. \$28.95.

This is a pictorial guide to the most commonly performed advanced pre hospital skills practised by Emergency Medical Technicians in the United States. As with many current American publications on pre hospital care this book is excellently illustrated with relevant clear photographs and diagrams on all aspects of necessary patient examination and resuscitation with a clear accompanying explanatory text. It is the clarity of illustration and simplicity of text that makes it a useful addition to the literature of pre hospital medicine.

Extended skills in ambulance aid have been practised by several services in the United Kingdom for a number of years. This year saw the introduction of the new National Health Service Training Authority syllabus of training in Extended Ambulance Aid, and most Regional Training Schools are now educating to this standard. Ambulance personnel are taught the necessary basic anatomy and physiology relating to trauma and cardiac collapse, and the appropriate resuscitation procedures are of value at the accident site and place of cardiac arrest. These skills include the establishment and maintenance of an intravenous line, selection of appropriate fluids, maintenance of an

airway, endotracheal intubation and ventilation and, when clinically indicated, cardiac monitoring and DC defibrillation. In addition they are given knowledge of a small selected group of resuscitation drugs and the preferred routes of administration. For the ambulanceman in training sections of *Atlas of Paramedic Skills* would be highly relevant and helpful. Of practical value are the chapters on Advanced Patient Assessment, Airway Management and Cardiac Related Skills. Although of interest, much of the material would not be immediately applicable under the current training programme for England and Wales, particularly the well illustrated section on Tension Pneumothorax Decompression Sites, Surgical Cricothyrotomy, Medical CPR and the MAST Suit.

However, I do feel that the book is of value to medical students during their clinical years of training, and on the shelf library for use by junior staff in Accident and Emergency Departments as well as family doctors providing roadside care.

Although I recommend this book for its clarity and presentation, I would point out that there are one or two errors in the text which would need to be corrected before the next edition. The abnormal plantar response is illustrated incorrectly, and in this day of AIDS and Hepatitis risk re-sheathing of hypodermic needles after use is a potentially hazardous procedure. The misspelling of Glasgow is unlikely to promote sales north of the border.

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