Atlas of Emergency Medicine, Second Edition
 By PETER ROSEN & GEORGE STERNBACH
 Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore. 1983. 234 pp.

Dr Rosen's two-volume textbook entitled *Emergency Medicine* must currently be considered the definitive textbook within the field. Its clarity, comprehensiveness, well structured format and excellent referencing have ensured its place on any accident and emergency department's library shelves. It is therefore interesting to see this Atlas which presumably is meant as a companion to the previous volumes.

The book has been divided into 11 sections relating to anatomical and functional areas of the body and the procedures involved. Within each section a number of techniques are described and illustrated. For each technique a series of instructions outlining the performance, errors and complications is given together with a number of line drawings to illustrate the text.

The instructions given are clear and concise. Refreshingly, it is a delight to read an American text where excess verbiage and annoying idiosyncratic usage is almost completely absent. The line drawings are, with some exceptions, good and adequately illustrate the technique involved.

There is little to quibble with in the selection of the techniques although there is no mention of splintage, immobilization and either plaster of paris application or the new resin-compound 'plasters'.

A few of the techniques do not cross the Atlantic well. Thus, it is suggested that gastric lavage be carried out with a naso-gastric tube with lavage being performed using a bulb on a 'Y' connection. There are a few techniques, which I would consider are inappropriately included and which I would be unhappy to see junior members of staff in our department performing routinely. These include culdocentesis, dorsal slit phimosis release, subdural aspiration (pictured in an infant) and aortic cross clamping. However, there are a few techniques which have been usefully included and which would not normally spring to mind. These include a section of a normal obstetrical delivery, escharotomy and some suturing techniques.

It might have been appropriate to indicate those techniques in which considerable practice should be obtained under skilled supervision, but in general this book is a welcome addition to the field. Its price may deter purchase except as a department library edition and perhaps the publishers should consider a cheaper paperback version with a reduction to pocket size.

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