The subject is divided into anatomical regions and each region is divided into trauma and non-trauma, which is helpful. Naturally, not all topics can be covered in one book and sometimes the choice of topics is a little bizarre. Nobody can attempt chest radiology in 40 pages and the authors state this in the preface.

As a Radiologist, I find it a book for and by clinicians and it has very much the feel of picture matching—but we all do this in difficult situations.

The classical trauma sections will appeal to the radiologists more than the chest and abdominal sections.

The casualty officer will find the tables of imaging techniques useful but it would have been helpful if some guidance had been given about the feasibility of different views on ill patients. Much trauma is initially investigated in the on-call situation when both medical or radiographic staff are relatively junior.

All in all, this book attempts an impossibly large subject and can't cover it adequately all the time. Nevertheless, it will have a place on the desk in the casualty department and, by radiological book standards, it is quite cheap.

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Médecine de Catastrophe

By DR RENÉ NOTO, PIERRE HUGUENARD & ALAIN LARCAN
Masson, Paris. 1987. 600pp. 165F.

This book is a volume in the publisher's series of 'Notes on Medicine'. It is written by the Chief Medical Officer of the Paris fire brigade (Dr R. Noto) and by the directors of two well-known units in the SAMU (Service d'aide médicale urgente) system. The book is probably aimed at those studying for a forthcoming diploma in disaster medicine.

For anyone concerned with this subject this is an interesting book with its all-embracing approach to the medical and other aspects of disasters. This is necessary when one considers the wide range of these events, even in Europe (for example, floods, forest fires, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions).

To English eyes this is a very 'French' book. For instance, the first 40 pages deal with the definition of a catastrophe. This is necessary for the French disaster plan which lays down the legal roles of everyone from the local mayor to minister. In addition to the main overall plan, there are 14 sub plans to deal with specific types of disaster, again covered by various ministerial decrees.

The authors deal fully with the disposition of the forces, medical, paramedical and other (e.g. army), needed along with the equipment required, including aircraft (helicopter and fixed-wing). They discuss methods of triage and evacuation of casualties and the disposal of dead. Nearly 300 pages are concerned with diagnostic techniques.

methods of care and the emergency treatment of different types of trauma, burns, blast injury, drowning, hypothermia, toxic agents and so on. Not all that is advocated might fit in with current British practices, but the way in which the authors define who should carry out the procedures and where they should be done is most interesting. The authors point out that a disaster does not halt the incidence of 'normal' acute medicine in the stricken community and births and deaths must continue to be cared for. A separate chapter deals with the psychological disturbances which can affect not only the victims of the disaster, but also those concerned in their rescue and in the surrounding area.

This book should prove very useful to all concerned with the development of disaster plans.

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