BOOK REVIEWS


The 19 chapters of this multiauthored book from Massachusetts present a reference for subacute and, in fact, the chapters of the two books apparently correspond.

The book is published in small print in clinical handbook style. The first page deals with acute angle-closure glaucoma, but then you have to start somewhere. It certainly deals with many conditions that you are likely to see and a lot more that are much less common. So if you think it’s a bit hard to read, what might help it give you on … let’s say sprained ankles? It’s not in the index under ankle, soft tissue injury or sprain. It’s not in the contents under “trauma”.

In the preface, the editors state that their handbook is intended as an extension to the major text “The clinical practice of emergency medicine” and in fact the chapters of the two books apparently correspond.

How about dog bites? Two lines: “Cat bites show a high prevalence of Pasteurella multocida, an organism that is present in the oral cavity of dogs. Radiographs are necessary to look for the development of osteomyelitis and fractures.” Mmmmm… Wait a minute, there’s another section later on dog bites. The present handbook doesn’t deal with it in the UK.

However, thousands of people throughout the world are killed each year by sharks, crocodiles, pachyderms, big cats and other large carnivores. And there, in fairness, a few lines about dogs. But the section on Crotalid Snake Envenomation (rattlesnake bites to you) is much, much longer.

OK, so how about the big stuff? Let’s take the heart attack. Well, it doesn’t deal with it as an entity, but the book includes very thorough sections on ischaemic heart disease, acute pericarditis, etc.

Should you buy it? Well, it is a good book if you want: • Lots of information Knowledge of diseases prevalent in the USA. • An American viewpoint on emergency medicine. • Eye strain. It is not for you if you want: • Lists of diagnostic advice. • A pocket reference • Information about common UK presentations.

Nevertheless, it is an important textbook and every department probably should have one. But really should be an English or a Scottish translation?

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Medicine and the Law are learned disciplines which are divided by a common language. Although English legal system countries administer the law through the medium of English for doctors and others who practice their profession in the same language, it is perhaps surprising and not a little disconcerting to discover that the respective professional groups use certain key English words to convey significantly different meanings. For example, most doctors encounter scientific method at some stage in their training, if only from a comfortable distance, but close enough to understand the concept of an issue such