BOOK REVIEWS

Manual of emergency orthopaedics

By PHILLIP M. SEGELOV

Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh. 1986. 234 pp. £14.95.

This manual is aimed at junior staff in the training grades and is excellent value for those engaged in accident and emergency work. It is equally suitable for SHO's training in orthopaedic surgery. It is not intended to be a reference book in the strict sense, but more of a handy book that can be readily consulted, with safe guidelines in a wide range of orthopaedic conditions.

The manual is conveniently divided into nine sections, each dealing with particular areas of the body. The first section looks at general issues of orthopaedics, discussing whether a fracture needs reducing, together with simple anaesthesia and analgesia. Other sections deal with fractures on a regional basis.

There is an excellent section on the limping child which contains more than enough information to prevent juniors making serious mistakes.

The manual has the advantage of being written by a single author who clearly demonstrates a deal of enthusiasm. His simple drawings are excellent, particularly when superimposed upon X-ray radiographs. Unfortunately, some of the photographs are poorly produced and, on one or two of them, it is virtually impossible to see what exactly the point is. This aspect is probably a reflection of the publishers maintaining an informative Manual at a very reasonable cost for the use of junior doctors.

At £14.95, it represents good value. The only flaw being some poor illustrations which do not do justice to an otherwise excellent Manual.

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Manual of Emergency Medicine

By J. L. JENKINS & J. LOSCALZO

Little, Brown & Co., Boston. 1986. 493 pp. £24.00.

Manual of Emergency Medicine is a new edition to the Little, Brown spiral-bound manual series. It is described as being a 'convenient reference for medical students, ER

Physicians, internists and house officers.' The book is divided into three sections dealing with medical disorders, trauma and special problems.

The section on medical disorders is divided into 32 chapters, each dealing with common symptoms (palpitations, rash and dizziness). The chapter starts with a general introduction to the topic followed by lists of common, less common and 'other' causes of the complaint. This is followed by sections on history, examination and emergency diagnostic tests. There is then a useful short section entitled 'clinical reminders' and finally, there are one or two paragraphs summarizing the salient features of conditions mentioned in the initial listings. This format is comprehensive and well written. It was, however, disappointing to find only six pages devoted to resuscitation compared with the 50 pages on poisoning. Undoubtedly, this reflects North American practice and experience. Although the authors suggest in their preface that the format will allow the reader to gain rapid access to information, the layout of the book which is in close set print, without diagrams or flow charts, is more attractive to the armchair browser than to the SHO in a panic. The authors are keen to teach by reasoning rather than by rote. Laudable though this may be, it does not, on occasion, allow rapid access to important information. For example, information about bicarbonate therapy during cardiac arrest can only be found by reading a paragraph headed 'Electrocardiogram.'

There is a good section on the general principles of extremity trauma, but the section dealing with the specific treatment of injuries lacks crispness. It is disappointing to see Dexamethasone vaguely recommended in the treatment of head injury and the recommendation that all patients with any loss of consciousness should be admitted for observation.

The section of 'Special Problems in Emergency Medicine and Trauma' covers such items as child abuse, diving accidents, electrical injuries, radiation illness and sexual assault. The authors' cursive style is ideal for these topics and these chapters are generally well written.

Overall this book is worth buying at £24.00. It is, however, not the book to buy on the day that you start in the A & E department. It will be good general revision material for final year medical students, but is sufficiently deep to be of value also to those pursuing a career in accident and emergency medicine and preparing for higher examinations.

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A Simple Guide to Trauma

By R. L. HUCKSTEP
Edinburgh. 1986. 397 pp.

Only 4 years have passed since the third edition of Professor Huckstep's guide was published; in view of the frequency with which a well-thumbed copy is seen on a desk in a casualty department or in the pocket of a white coat, supplies were exhausted and a new edition was prepared. The most obvious difference is that the text is bolder and