Out-Patient Surgery

By GEORGE J. HILL

W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, USA 1988. 729 pp. £37.50.

This reviewer is not an avid reader of text books so I have approached this one with a degree of scepticism. Since it is the 3rd edition within 15 years I presume somebody must be reading it. It is in effect a text book of surgery but looked at through the eyes of someone working in out-patients. This seems bizarre to someone working in the UK but on the continent and in North America from where the book originates it may have more relevance. Perhaps a better title in the UK would be 'Surgery that can be done as a Day Case or in the Accident and Emergency Room'. It covers surgery that can be done within 1 h and requires less than a 2-h stay in the recovery room. In the first chapter there are lists of suitable operations and the numbers performed per annum in the USA.

For a student wishing to learn surgery there are better text books than this. For a junior surgeon wishing to learn details of operative techniques there are also better places to find the information. Having said that, what is written in the book is perfectly clear and well illustrated. I can see it being of use on a shelf in an accident and emergency department, where one wanted to read up a little about a subject that was outside ones own area. It provides an interesting alternative approach to the study of a wide range of surgical subjects.

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Yearbook of Emergency Medicine 1989

Edited by DAVID K. WAGNER

Yearbook Medical Publishers, Inc., Chicago, London & Boca Raton, 1989. 300 pp.

This is the 10th Year Book of Emergency Medicine, and as the editor points out in his introduction the past decade is one in which the specialty has become accepted and developed its own unique body of knowledge. This year's volume reflects many of the changes that are occurring within the specialty in North America and to a lesser extent in Europe. As in previous editions much space is devoted to aspects of resuscitation. The selection of such articles is of high quality, the synopses are clear and the editorial comments invariably pertinent.

It is chastening to see the extent and quality of such research being performed in North America and by contrast the poor representation both from the United Kingdom and the rest of Western Europe. In relation to this the two principal accident and emergency journals in the United Kingdom are not even cited in the Journal scan—editors please note.

One of the joys of this type of book is that it can be used both as a way of rapidly

scanning the literature within one's own fields of interest, and to dip into and find nuggets of fascination which prompt a further exploration of the field.

This is not a book for junior medical staff to buy, but it is a book for those with enquiring and research-oriented minds to search out in the local medical library to stimulate further reading and research activities.

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Essential Radiology in Head Injury—A Diagnostic Atlas of Skull Trauma

By D. W. H. MOK & L. KREEL

Heinemann Medical Books, Oxford, 1988. 209 pp., 203 figs., £35.00.

Correct management of patients with head injuries is one of the most difficult challenges faced by inexperienced casualty officers. This book is an attempt to cover the relevant portions of several standard radiological texts in one volume of reasonable size. In this endeavour the joint authors, one an orthopaedic surgeon and the other a radiologist of international repute, have succeeded.

A short introduction deals with the Royal College of Radiologists' selection criteria for skull radiography following trauma, supplemented by the authors' own views. Chapters on radiographic positioning and radiological anatomy follow and then the meat of the book is given over to the diagnosis of fractures and their associated features. Illustrations of fractures are interspaced by normal variants which simulate traumatic lesions. This mixing of 'lesions' and 'non-lesions' makes the book difficult to use as a quick reference in the middle of the night, but a more authoritative text (Keats, 1988) is available for this purpose.

Further chapters cover the special features of paediatric fractures, basal fractures, post-surgical appearances and foreign bodies. Probably the best-written and most valuable section of the book is that given over to facial injuries. Several CAT scans are included for completeness as our projections such as the submentovertical which are unsuited to the casualty department. Each chapter has a short list of references and suggested further reading.

There are the usual number of proof-reading errors and rather vague annotations of illustrations, but these are of a minor nature. The scope of this book is wide and the authors are to be congratulated on producing a concise and readable book (perhaps the page demonstrating poor quality films, together with rather trite comments, could have been omitted!).

At the end of the day—when indeed this work will be of most value to its intended user—a book illustrating radiographs succeeds or fails on its standard of image reproduction. With only a handful of exceptions the 203 illustrations are of at least acceptable quality.

In summary I would recommend this reasonably priced book to all new casualty officers as an excellent guide to the radiological management of head injuries. Mutual