
Book Reviews

Textbook of medicine.
Edited by Souhami RL,
Moxham J . Publishers
Churchill Livingstone
1990. Price £24.95(£UK).

This completely new textbook of clinical medicine comes in to fill a major gap on the medical student bookshelf. Written in a clear and straightforward manner, each chapter has been covered by recognised experts in the field to produce an excellent up to date source of information to the student.

As the editors have emphasised in their preface, much effort has been made in this book to try to understand the mechanisms of disease from a cellular and physiological aspect. Indeed as one goes through each chapter, each topic becomes more exciting with these new understandings. One should point out the inclusion of a number of important new chapters which have up until now been neglected in other similar texts. Fifteen well written pages have been devoted to introduce genetics as a basis of disease to the reader. Despite being one of the fastest growing areas of medicine, it was presented by the authors in a concise and up to date version with the latest techniques and discoveries in this field. The major impact of immunology and nutrition on modern medicine has been dealt with splendidly starting from basic understanding of the immune system to organ transplantation. As the Western World faces a more and more elderly population, a major section of this book has been apportioned to deal with medicine of the elderly, and not only medical students but many general physicians will find a delightful wealth of information covering this area. None of the major new diseases of the late '80's have been forgotten and a great deal of effort has been made to present the chapter on HIV as accurate as possible - giving a much needed importance to the major disease of our times.

Throughout this textbook, one can feel that much emphasis has been put on the clinical aspect of diseases and unlike some other textbooks, a clear explanation is given for every symptom and sign - which helps the reader further in understanding the disease. The layout of each chapter is well organised with ever present summary tables which are extremely useful to allow the reader to pause and assimilate topics better. The illustrations are superb and further enhanced with delightful algorithms. It is worth mentioning the astute use of pictures and x-rays whenever appropriate and the picture of a Coronal CT Scan in a patient with dysthyroid eye disease (P969)

would excite many thyroidologists! As modern medicine moves further into diagnostic investigations, the authors allow adequate lines of discussion on their relative efficacy. Furthermore, the chapter on gastrointestinal diseases starts with a good description of the various endoscopes available and their relative superiority over x-ray tests.

However, one should mention a few chapters which are probably slightly too concise and short, given their relative importance - one would have liked to read more on Lyme's disease and on Alzheimer's disease - both topics occupying only a small portion of this book.

Overall, this is an excellent, well written, current textbook, which one should strongly recommend to the medical student, to the postgraduate student of internal medicine, and to the general physician. It comes at a reasonably affordable price and will, no doubt, become popular among many readers.

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