BOOK REVIEWS

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Book Review Editor

Recent Advances in Sexually Transmitted Diseases, R. S. Morton and J. R. W. Harris (eds). Churchill Livingstone Medical Division, Longman Inc., New York, 1975. (420 pp, $35.00)

The British are particularly adept at writing clear, concise, and authoritative books relating to dermatology. This publication on the sexually transmitted diseases is no exception.

Venereology has been expanded to include all of the sexually transmitted diseases. In contrast to severely limiting the scope of this book to recent advances, the authors have briefly, yet completely, brought readers up-to-date on current clinical knowledge, diagnostic procedures, and therapeutic measures. The reader soon discovers the latest findings in clinical and laboratory research are presented in a context that allows one to integrate and assimilate much new information effortlessly. Documentation and references are excellent. It should be mentioned that the authors do not hesitate to omit material deemed unimportant or inaccurate.

In summary, this is a most readable, complete, and authoritative book written by two authors who are recognized experts in this field, and would be a timely addition to any clinician’s or investigator’s library.

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Dr. Parrish presents the basic relevant concepts of dermatology in clear, minimally technical language well within the grasp of nurses, or even the interested layman with a modicum of biologic sophistication. This book is in general too superficial for most medical students or physicians, however. No prior knowledge of such ideas as “antigens and antibodies” is assumed—all is explained from the very beginning.

The chief concern of the author is to establish a fundamental understanding of three concepts in the minds of his readers: some idea of the normal structure and function of the skin, the common sorts of things that can go wrong with the skin, and the importance of the skin to the individual. The chapters on the anatomy and physiology of the skin are exceptionally well done and constitute the strongest part of the book. The discussion of common skin disorders seems arbitrary in its organization (“Infections and Infestations,” “Disorders of Mucous Membranes,” “Blisters, Ulcers, and Bedsores”), but perhaps makes good sense for the reader only superficially concerned with etiology and histology. Emphasis is on categories of disorders rather than specific disease entities. Consistent with the adage, “Common things occur most commonly,” the thrust of the descriptive chapters is toward achieving for the reader some degree of knowledgeable comfort in recognizing, describing, and understanding the treatment of those disorders that make up the bulk, numerically, of the practice of dermatology.

Although the history of the cutaneous lesion and the examination of the lesion itself are stressed by Dr. Parrish, he also gives equal consideration to the patient as a whole. Reported discussions of the psychologic implications of skin disease punctuate each topic. The author's appeal to the sensitivity of all those involved in patient care in handling these ubiquitous problems reinforces a central theme of the importance of the provider-patient relationship as a therapeutically necessary source of acceptance and support. With the same conscientiousness, the author explores the converse potential for patient damage and the concerned thoughtfulness necessary for its avoidance.

This small book will undoubtedly prove a welcome and valuable addition to the education of the health care team, in providing a good, palatable,