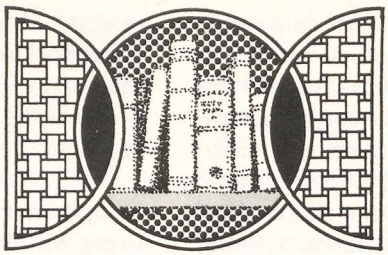
Book Reviews



Termination: The Closing at Baker Plant. *Alfred Slote. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis/New York, 1969, 340 pp., $11.50.*

Although this is not a new book, it is a classic in its field. With some of the inevitability of a Greek tragedy, it traces the human story of 32 men whose reactions to the closing of their long-time place of work was followed as part of a research study. With a novelist's skill, Slote provides an ancillary psychosomatic textbook in describing the impact of the fundamental change of job termination on the lifestyles and especially the health of salaried and hourly workers alike.

Termination is based on a study in community medicine under the auspices of the Institute for Social Research of the University of Michigan. Cobb's research revealed that out of 54 men studied, the Baker closing and its immediate aftermath precipitated "three cases of ulcers, eight cases of arthritis, five cases of hypertension requiring hospitalization, two cases of labile hypertension, six cases of depression severe enough to require medical help, one case of alcoholism, and three industrial accidents suffered by men in new jobs they disliked." In addition there were two cases of alopecia. The difference between success and failure in coping with this difficult change seems to lie in a mixture of luck, job skills, the kind of wife a man has, his age, his intelligence, and his emotional make-up. In some cases, wives were hit harder than their husbands by the Baker closing. Several of the children were seriously affected, while the "control groups showed no such parallel upsurge in family illnesses and social problems."

Because of the book's readability, it would seem to be useful in helping students and others understand the practical application of the psychosomatic concepts of Holmes and Rahe. Traditionally, lip service is given to the importance of the family and social history in undergraduate courses and in residency programs. Often the reason for this is not well understood by the student or young physician. Through this book the young physician gets a chance to have some intimate, though vicarious, experience with the impact of the exigencies of life on the health of his/her patients. The concept of the usefulness of the "sick role" to replace the discomfort of the "umemployed role" is well brought out in the book. Three case descriptions provide a relatively dispassionate understanding of the psychology of the patient with multiple complaints who seems totally defeated by the disasters of his life.

"Termination" and the study from which it derives could well

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serve as an example of much needed research in industrial medicine or community medicine. At the end of the book, there are several recommendations concerning community preventive action which might have decreased the incidence of illness and minimized the economic trauma to the men involved in the closing of Baker plant. *Termination* deserves a place in the annals of medical evolution along with the three classics: *Devils, Drugs, and Doctors; Rats, Lice, and History;* and *Nine Blue Men.*

Joseph B. Deisher, MD
University of Washington
Seattle

Toxicologic Emergencies: A Handbook in Problem Solving. *Lewis R. Goldfrank, Robert Kirstein. Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, 1977, 180 pp., $9.75 (paper).*

Toxicologic Emergencies is of interest to physicians in primary and emergency care, medical students, and residents. Practicing physicians will find it an easily read, interesting review of the subject, but its case-history format will make its use as a quick reference difficult. However, it would appear to be an ideal text for medical students and residents during their training in emergency care. There are no illustrations in the text, but several excellent tables complement the text nicely.

The author's discussion, limited to the initial evaluation and treatment of the patient, enhances its usefulness to the Emergency Room physician; however, this limits its usefulness to practicing physicians providing care for the patient after the emergency phase. An additional limitation is that only two of the 19 cases discussed are pediatric, yet the family physician finds toxicological emergencies a major problem in the pediatric age group.

George Hess, MD
Carson City, Nevada

ECG Diagnosis: Self Assessment, Volume II. *Edward K. Chung. Harper and Row, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1972, 444 pp., $17.95 (paper).*

The purpose of this book is to teach electrocardiogram interpretation to physicians, including house staff, family physicians, Emergency Room physicians, internists, cardiology fellows, and cardiologists. Coronary care unit nurses and other emergency personnel would also benefit.

This paperback volume presents 200 electrocardiographic tracings, each with a short case history. On the page following each ECG is a concise, clearly written interpretation of the tracing.

The tracings include the most common electrocardiographic abnormalities that are likely to be encountered in practice, including normal variants, hypertrophy, ischemia, abnormal impulse formation, conduction defects, and arrhythmias.

My sample copy is already becoming dog-eared from use. This promises to become one of the most used books in my library. The conditions are grouped in such a way that the easier interpretations for a given condition, such as hypertrophy, are printed first and the more difficult ones later on in the chapter. A well-arranged cross-index at the end of the book pro-

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vides easy access to all the conditions.

This is a beautiful book for teaching advanced ECG interpretation to people who have a solid grasp of the fundamentals of electrocardiographic interpretation. The book assumes that the reader understands the basic principles and goes on from there. The tracings are clear and can be duplicated easily for the purpose of presenting "unknowns" to learners. Then after the learners commit themselves, the explanations can be provided. In this manner the book can also be used for self-assessment of interpretive skills, and can become a significant factor in continuing medical education.

John A. Lincoln, MD
University of Washington
Seattle

Color Atlas of Physical Signs in General Medicine. *M. Zatouroff. Yearbook Medical Publishers, Chicago, 1977, 464 pp., $47.95.*

This hardbound volume consists of 812 color photographs in 464 pages. Each photograph is accompanied by a brief description of the condition presented. The book is intended to be used by undergraduate medical students to learn the appearance of various clinical entities and to increase the skill of careful observation. It is also anticipated that it will be of help to practicing physicians by describing manifestations of unusual diseases.

The author is a physician in Kuwait and an honorary clinical assistant at the Royal Northern Hospital in London. Consequently, there are a number of photographs of conditions which are rarely, if ever, seen in the United States such as leprosy, kwashiorkor, and active lupus vulgaris (tuberculosis of the skin). Indeed the average American family physician will find a great deal in this book which will never be encountered in clinical practice. Nevertheless, the photographs are of excellent quality and the clinical descriptions are brief and concise.

A book of this size which attempts to provide broad clinical coverage is bound to leave large gaps. Consequently, one will search in vain for a photograph of an inflammed tympanic membrane, or of cervicitis, or of cervical polyps. In addition, the book devotes ten pages to photographs of patients with acromegaly but only two pages to patients with Parkinson disease. Several pages in the section on abdominal problems are devoted to descriptions of how to examine the abdomen. Although that section is well done, it might more properly belong in a textbook on physical examination. For the teachers of family medicine or for the family physician in the United States, this book is likely to have limited usefulness.

It does provide beautifully clear photographs which a physician preparing for board examinations might use to increase powers of observation and it certainly provides photographs of a wide variety of conditions. As such it might be useful for a physician planning to practice in Africa. The practicing physician or the resident or teacher here is not likely to be able to use it either as a reference or in a systematic way for teaching.

John A. Lincoln, MD
University of Washington
Seattle