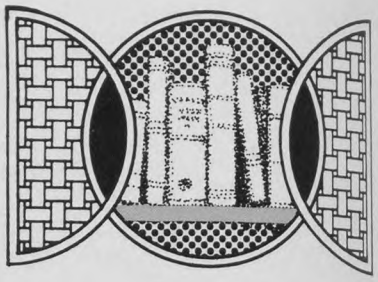
Book Reviews



Pictorial Manual of Neurologic Tests. *Maurice W. Van Allen, Robert L. Rodnitzky. Year Book Medical Publishers, Chicago, 1981, 227 pp., $19.95.*

To any family physician, a reference text that covers one organ system can be very useful if it is neither too brief nor too wordy. Many reference texts go into worthwhile reviews of differential diagnoses and treatments of various disorders. Other reference texts are of limited value because of the way the material is covered or because of their approach.

As a reference resource, the *Pictorial Manual of Neurologic Tests* by Allen and Rodnitzky is much less a pictorial manual than a descriptive guide to performing and interpreting a neurologic examination that can be carried out in an office or in the hospital. The title alone is insufficient to give appropriate information to a prospective buyer as to what the book is about. The text does cover neurologic testing. There is only a very cursory statement about symptoms that might cause abnormal test responses, and it does not go into any treatment modality. Thus as a reference text, it is probably better for medical students, allied health personnel, or residents who are reviewing exactly how to perform a neurologic examination, not how to interpret abnormal testing evaluation. It may also be useful to family physicians in reviewing their understanding of some basic neurologic tests. It is, however, not so useful in my opinion for the majority of practicing family physicians.

There are certain problems with the book. It is a very unusual size (6.25 inches high by 9.25 inches across) and would stick out or not fit easily on many bookcases or shelves. Although the book is described as a pictorial manual, there are proportionately few pictures, and these are drawings of approaches to doing some neurologic evaluation or some abnormal responses. In addition, the text has very small type, especially for a book of this size; this took some getting used to at first. It therefore does not offer the reader quickly visible test information.

The first chapter of the text, a good review of the basic neurologic examination, would be of benefit to anyone. The subsequent chapters are compressed and slightly disorganized. Although the neurologic system may not lend itself easily to compartmentalization, one chapter on abnormal signs and syndromes

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covers everything from cranial nerves to dyskinesias, signs of meningitis, root compression syndromes, peripheral nerve paralysis, neurocutaneous syndrome, to rectal and pelvic examinations. This is a very disjointed approach to the neurologic system and abnormal neurologic responses. The chapter does cover all of the subjects involved, but again at a very cursory level. It seems almost as if this chapter were added to expand the scope of the book beyond simply offering a text on how to do a neurologic examination and how to interpret neurologic findings. The book certainly does not seem like the kind of reference text that would be utilized frequently, but there do seem to be some portions that could be useful on a limited basis.

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Training for General Practice. *Dennis J. Pereira Gray. Macdonald & Evans, Limited, Plymouth, England, 1981, 310 pp., $9.95.*

Postgraduate training in family medicine has developed quite differently on each side of the Atlantic. The British apprenticeship system of training in a physician's office is a sharp contrast to the American residency clinic.

Dr. D. J. Pereira Gray's book describes the development of training for general practice in the United Kingdom from the perspective of one who has been intimately concerned with its history and current organization. Dr. Gray has written the book for trainers and trainees and for the large numbers of others involved in health care delivery who are part of, or who support, educational programs in general practice.

Without a detailed knowledge of training in the United Kingdom, it is difficult to provide an adequate opinion of the book's value to its intended readership. It is certainly clearly written and contains many references to decisions and documents that have been crucial to the implementation of the current vocational training programs. To an American with little appreciation of the political and cultural differ-

ences, Dr. Gray's account is fascinating, although of little relevance here.

Several chapters do have international appeal, particularly those dealing with teaching methods, the trainer-trainee relationship, and the curriculum of courses for trainees. Many of the issues addressed in these chapters will be familiar to many American family physicians, and it is a great shame that, because of the stated goal of the book to concentrate on general principles, we are not treated to greater detail.

I put the book down feeling that it provided an excellent summary of the philosophy and direction of teaching in general practice in the United Kingdom, but it would be of little direct value in the United States, except to provoke thought on other methods of training that might be more practical or economical than our present system.

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Principles of Biomedical Ethics. *Tom L. Beauchamp, James F. Childress. Oxford University Press, New York, 1979, 314 pp, $15.95 (cloth), $8.95 (paper).*

There are two broad categories of books on medical ethics available to the interested clinician or teacher. The first type focuses on the analysis of clinical cases, usually with one or more medical authors who are clinicians. The approach in this type is to understand the ethical issues embedded in the traditional approach to managing clinical problems. The second type, typified by this book, comes from the liberal arts community and is frequently written by medical ethicists with a background in sociology, philosophy, or religion. The authors of this book are a philosopher and a professor of religious studies.

The book is aimed at health care professionals such as physicians and nurses, research investigators, and policy makers, as well as philosophers, theologians, and students interested in medical ethics. The authors presuppose a minimum acquaintance with philosophy, theology, and medicine. The book deals with moral and ethical theory and then touches in detail on some fundamental ethical principles, such as autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice. Chapters are also included on the professional-patient relationship (including confidentiality and truth telling), and on philosophical notions of ideals, virtues, and integrity (including conscience). Appendices include case studies and a summary of the various medical codes of ethics. The book is complemented by a fairly short selected bibliography of books.

In teaching medical ethics, clinicians who have conducted ethical analyses on a number of typical day-to-day cases begin to look for a more detailed discussion of the general ethical principles that lie behind any systematic approach to understanding ethical dilemmas. This book provides a very readable and useful overview of this level of ethical analysis. It is a helpful reference book for teachers of ethics, and the treatment of ethical issues is lucid and balanced. It will not be of immediate value to the practicing clinician faced with an issue in his practice but would be the kind of text that he might eventually consult.

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