

Annotated multiple choice questions

*Australian Medical Council. Ed: Marshall VC, Clark AL, Buzzard AJ, et al
Blackwell Science Asia, 54 University Street, PO Box 378, Carlton South, Victoria 3053, Australia
A\$79.95, pp 412, ISBN 0 86793 377 1*

This book contains more than 600 multiple choice questions that cover medicine, surgery, paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, psychiatry, general practice, laboratory tests, and diagnostic imaging. There are usually five responses to each question. For some questions, there is only one correct response; for others, there are several correct answers. There is short commentary accompanying each question. There is also a section on eponyms at the end which makes fascinating reading and may be useful to honours candidates.

The remarkable thing about this book is that it is written by a panel of examiners for the Australian Medical Council Examination. The questions were selected from their pool of examination questions and are thus carefully thought out, unambiguous, and, above all, authentic. The book is primarily aimed at doctors who have trained outside Australia and who are applying for registration in Australia—they will find it indispensable. Not surprisingly, some of the questions reflect the pattern of disease and medical practice in Australia. For example, sarcoidosis and inflammatory bowel disease receive coverage, but nasopharyngeal and oesophageal carcinoma do not. I do not think this is a drawback: this book can be confidently recommended to undergraduates in Hong

Kong who are preparing for finals, and to graduates preparing for qualifying examinations in other countries.

The questions are nearly all clinically relevant and the knowledge sought is usually fundamental to good medical practice. There are rarely any questions on obscure topics and the overall emphasis is not on factual recall of knowledge from textbooks. Many questions are prefaced by a short case history, which gives a contemporary feel to the questions. Anyone who ploughs through these questions diligently will be rewarded by a sound grasp of the basics of modern medicine. The book is beautifully laid out and, although it contains more than 400 pages, it will fit into the pocket of a white coat. It costs nearly A\$80 which, regrettably, may make it slightly beyond the budget of students.

Dr BMY Cheung
Division of Clinical Pharmacology
Department of Medicine
The University of Hong Kong
Queen Mary Hospital
Pokfulam
Hong Kong

Antibiotics in laboratory medicine, fourth edition

*Ed: Lorian V
Williams & Wilkins Asia-Pacific Ltd., Room 808, Metroplaza Tower 2, 223 Hing Fong Road, New Territories, Hong Kong
HK\$1696.50, pp 1238, ISBN 0 683 05169 5*

There are 19 chapters in this book. Chapters 1 to 6 list different methods of antimicrobial susceptibility testing of rapidly growing bacteria (chapters 1 and 2), anaerobes (chapter 3), mycobacteria (chapter 4), fungi (chapter 5), and atypical organisms (chapter 6) such as chlamydiae, mycoplasmas, *Rickettsia*, and spirochaetes. Susceptibility testing guidelines follow those recommended by the National Committee of Clinical Laboratory Standards of the United States. Some chapters also include methods of assays of antimicrobial activities in body fluids although there is a separate chapter (chapter 7) on this

topic. Although most laboratories would not perform susceptibility testing on atypical organisms (especially those that require tissue culture or in vivo techniques for growth), chapter 6 is important, especially for those who work in localities where emerging resistance is a problem among these organisms.

Every step and technical detail of each method are given so that even a novice in the field can follow the protocols and perform the tests successfully. Background information on the antibiotics (including