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## Book notices

*Mediastinal tumors and pseudotumors: diagnosis, pathology and surgical treatment.* Istvan Besznyak, Bela Szende, Karoly Lapis. (Pp 336; \$77.25; S fr 129; DM 154.) Karger. 1984.

This book, printed in Hungary by Akadémiai Kiado, with the sole distribution rights in the non-socialist countries reserved by Karger, is the result of a close collaboration of a surgeon and two pathologists of international repute. The first two chapters cover anatomy of the mediastinum and the diagnosis of mediastinal space occupying lesions. The final chapter gives a good resumé of the surgical considerations in the treatment of mediastinal pathology. Each of the intervening eight chapters covers extensively the pathogenesis and pathology of individual groups of tumours, with short and succinct sections on surgical treatment. The authors state categorically that it was not their intention to discuss the place of radiotherapy or chemotherapy in the treatment of mediastinal pathology. That the wisdom of this policy is suspect is quite clear by the time the reader reaches the end of chapter 3. The authors are to be congratulated on their attempt at simplifying the classification of thymic tumours, and in doing so indicating the clinical course of the respective groups. This book is well produced and readable. The pathological, histological, and ultrastructure illustrations are of a very high quality, but the same cannot be said of the radiological reproductions. No book on the mediastinum today should be published without examples of computed tomography illustrations and yet I failed to find a single example. A paragraph of three sentences is devoted to this entire subject, while several paragraphs (and a whole page of illustrations) are wasted on obsolete kymography. Each chapter is accompanied by a comprehensive list of references. Had the authors adopted the numerical system of citing references I would have found the pages far more captivating. There are several instances where whole paragraphs are

devoted to listing references by authors and dates to qualify short statements. Despite these shortcomings, the chest physician and the surgical pathologist should find this book well worth reading. The practising thoracic surgeon should certainly recommend it for his departmental library, but at a price of \$77.25 it will meet with a lot of competition from other excellent contemporary publications in the same field.—KJ

*Current therapy of respiratory disease 1984-1985.* Reuben M Cherniack. (Pp 331; £38.) BC Decker Inc. 1984.

The purpose of this book is to present concise, up to date summaries of a comprehensive range of topics in respiratory medicine, emphasising recent advances in clinical science, diagnostic techniques, and therapeutic manoeuvres. By accepting the form of a yearbook in respiratory medicine, with regular revision, the editor seeks to reduce the "significant lag between the acquisition of new knowledge and its dissemination to practitioners." The book is divided into sections describing the upper respiratory tract, airways disease, parenchymal disorders, pulmonary vascular disease, pleural disease, lung cancer, and respiratory failure. The most enjoyable chapters (for example,  $\alpha_1$  antitrypsin deficiency, pulmonary embolism, therapy of cor pulmonale, acute mountain sickness) are succinct, providing an expert review of areas of growing importance in the field, without preoccupation with minutiae. The value of the text as a whole would be enhanced by the inclusion of key references for further reading. The predominantly North American authorship devalues much of the therapeutics for British readers; there are striking differences in treatment regimens for tuberculosis and in the relative importance of  $\beta_2$  agonists and xanthine derivatives in the management of bronchial asthma. Because of this emphasis on therapeutics, the value of the book for a British readership is limited.—RMC