

Book notices

The Human Pulmonary Circulation: its form and function in health and disease. 3rd ed. Peter Harris and Donald Heath. (Pp 702; £85.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1986. ISBN 0 443 02574 6.

Classics are difficult to review; they should only improve, and the third edition of *The Human Pulmonary Circulation* fulfills this expectation. The content has been brought up to date with an increase in the number of illustrations but no increase in size, the text of this edition being slightly shorter than previously. The book remains arranged around structure, both normal and abnormal, but includes extensive consideration of the physiology, biochemistry, and pharmacology of the lesser circulation. In keeping with new concepts of the role of the pulmonary circulation in homeostasis there is a comprehensive review of the circulation as a metabolic unit, including a new chapter on the endothelial cell. This provides an excellent outline of the structural specialisation of this cell, its metabolic functions such as amine uptake and enzymatic conversion of circulating peptides, and its importance as a modulator of vascular smooth muscle contraction. There has been extensive revision of chapters dealing with the pathology of pulmonary hypertension and new chapters dealing with parasitic causes and advances on the structural basis of plexogenic arteriopathy. If there are weak spots they are few. The chapter on pulmonary oedema could be criticised for a rather cursory handling of the adult respiratory distress syndrome with little detail of recent attempts to improve management. Overall the book is well produced, with high quality photomicrographs, electronmicrographs, and line drawings. This edition continues the standard set by the previous editions and remains the reference text for the pathologist, physician, and surgeon with an interest in the pulmonary circulation.—DS

Clinical Doppler Echocardiography. Jose Missri. (\$45.) New York: Yorke Medical Books, 1986.

The explosion of Doppler echocardiography on the cardiological scene has been followed by a flood of books dealing with the subject. Many of these books add little to those already available. This book, however, is an exception. It is suitable for physicians with a cardiological interest wanting to understand what can be done with the Doppler technique. It will also be appreciated by technicians who perform and interpret Doppler recordings. It will not, however, be of much interest to the full time cardiologist as it does not go into sufficient detail or consider the shortcomings of the technique and its applications with enough criticism. The positive features of this book outweigh the negative. It has a practical clinical flavour which is enhanced by useful case examples at the end (among which is the remarkable case of a young man with a ventricular septal defect caused by a bullet wound). Other positive features are the wide range of subjects covered and the generally excellent referencing at the end of each chapter. The layout of the book is good and makes it easily readable. Among the negative features is the generally mediocre standard of both line drawings and Doppler illustrations, the inadequate explanation of the basic physics behind the Doppler technique, and the somewhat uncritical approach to the shortcomings of the technique. The inclusion of occasional phrases such as "complex multi-parameter diagnostic situations" maybe off putting to some readers. In conclusion, this book is a useful addition to Doppler publications with its strong clinical flavour. It may be recommended as a good introduction to the subject for clinicians with an interest in cardiology, medical students, and cardiology technicians even though it is not sufficiently detailed to be of much interest to the full time cardiologist.—RH