

**Practical General Medicine—Cardiovascular and Respiratory Diseases. Questions and Answers.** Douglas Model. (Pp 317; £10.95.) London: Cole and Whurr, 1989. ISBN 1 871381 14 2.

This book is said to be intended as a learning tool for medical students and doctors studying for membership of the Royal College of Physicians, using an arrangement of case histories and questionnaire answers that match the questions that arise as patients present to their doctors in everyday practice. It consists of 21 small chapters but only six of these are devoted to respiratory cases. The histories are quite short, one being only 11 lines, and thus serve merely as an introduction to the chapter. The questions and lists of causes are short descriptions of mechanisms, which are subsequently answered in fairly standard textbook fashion. The text is interspersed with line diagrams to explain mechanisms, some being quite simple, such as the one illustrating the distribution of anginal pain. The emphasis of the book is quite patchy; for instance, there are six pages on digoxin treatment and a little less than a page on vasodilators. I do not think that this would be an adequate textbook of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases for doctors taking postgraduate examinations, but it might be a useful learning tool for medical students as a supplement to standard textbooks.—DV

**Statistics With Confidence.** MJ Gardner, DG Altman. (Pp 140; £7.95, £7.45 for BMA members). London: British Medical Journal, 1989. ISBN 0 7279 0222 9.

There has been justifiable criticism of the

excessive use of p values in medical journals, particularly when they are presented without an indication of the magnitude of change or size of differences. The use of confidence intervals overcomes this problem and many journals now expect confidence intervals to be given where appropriate. It is not always easy, however, for the novice to know how or where to start. This book is designed for those with a limited understanding of confidence intervals as well as for those with some knowledge of statistics who wish to widen the scope of the use of confidence intervals. It is based on the eight articles that were published recently in the "Statistics in Medicine" columns of the *British Medical Journal*, but with some revision and expansion. The first two chapters discuss the advantages of using confidence intervals and the following five chapters describe the calculation of confidence intervals for all commonly used statistics, in addition to less well known applications, as in non-parametric analyses, relative risks, odds ratios, and survival time analyses. Easy to follow worked examples are provided throughout and specially compiled tables to help the calculation of confidence intervals are given in the last few pages. The final two chapters provide useful statistical guidelines and check lists for authors of scientific papers. The IBM computer program produced in conjunction with the book is suitable for sample sizes of less than 500. It is easy to use, should save several hours of manual calculations, and—most importantly—calculates confidence intervals in non-parametric analyses, a feature lacking in almost all the well known computer packages. It does not include the facility for importing data from other programs; it is hoped, however, that the authors will incor-

porate the feature in later versions. The book and tape are strongly recommended to the non-statistician author of medical research papers, both to increase understanding of confidence intervals and as a small reference book for calculation of confidence intervals when required.—ASV

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## NOTICE

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### Course in cardiopulmonary pathology

A course of lectures, hands on microscopy sessions, and a slide seminar will be held at the National Heart and Lung Institute, Brompton Hospital, London, on 11–15 June 1990. The pulmonary and cardiac modules may be taken separately. The lecturers will include B J Addis, R H Anderson, A E Becker, M J Davies, B Fox, D M Geddes, S Y Ho, P K Jeffery, M N Sheppard, and C A Wagenvoort. The course fees are: lung pathology (11–13 June) £150.00; cardiac pathology (14–15 June) £100.00; full course (11–15 June) £225.00.

Further details from the Postgraduate Education Centre, National Heart and Lung Institute, London SW3 6LY (tel: 01-351 8172 (24 hour answering service); fax 01-376 3442).