

BOOK REVIEW

CLINICAL EMBRYOLOGY: Edited by Harrison R. J. Academic Press, London, New York, San Francisco 1978. 241 pages & 122 figures.

This is a book from monographs for students of Medicine by A. W. Asscher and R. J. Harrison as series editors.

As mentioned by Harrison in his preface the knowledge of development is becoming increasingly important in the comprehension of anomalies and the surgery of congenital deformities

Clinical embryology is a very useful book for undergraduates and postgraduates of all the branches of medicine. The text book is readable, concise and gives clear ideas about the science of human development. The section of clinical relationships is added to each chapter. This is a special feature of this book. The discussion about aetiology of development defects and the role of embryology in disease is very useful for clinical students. Alphabetical list of references is also attached to each chapter.

For Obstetricians and Gynaecologists the chapters on spermatogenesis, oogenesis, formation of blastocyst, development of the placenta, fetal circulation and urogenital system are very well illustrated with a number of figures. The chapters on development of other systems are also useful to understand the foetal development and common congenital malformations. This book is a valuable contribution to the literature of embryology and

also a very good addition to all the branches of clinical medicine. I strongly recommend it.

B. Vaidya

COLPOSCOPY: Second Edition by Malcolm Coppelson, Ellis Pixley and Bevan Reid. Published by Charles C. Thomas 1978.

This monograph on Colposcopy is beautifully written and equally beautifully illustrated. Today, when early cervical neoplasia are a hot topic for study the world over, this book is a most welcome addition to current literature and throws much light on the subject.

Although, traditionally, Colposcopy has been known as an European art, the authors are from Australia and there are valuable contributions from American workers. Thus it overcomes the "language barrier" which has kept most of the literature on the subject out of the reach of the English speaking world.

Colposcopy is still a new field in India and very few centres exist where this diagnostic tool is available. However, the magnitude of the problem of cancer cervix looms high. Cytology has succeeded in making early diagnosis possible and perhaps if used together with colposcopy, the emphasis may shift rapidly from late to early lesions.

The book begins by reviewing the

scientific bases for colposcopy thus introducing the subject to a person who has not yet ventured to use the instrument. The terminology used has been updated in view of recent advances and dwelves deep into the details of epithelial changes. Each lesion is amply illustrated with high magnification microphotographs. At each stage cytological and histological patterns are correlated, making it more meaningful to practising cytologists and cyto-pathologists.

A detailed description of the instruments available together with steps of technique make this publication valuable to new entrants into the field of colposcopy.

"Angio-architecture" is perhaps a new word for most Gynaecologists. Meaning essentially the pattern of blood vessel on the cervix, angio-architecture forms the basis on which colposcopic diagnosis is based. It is difficult to describe this in words. It can only be appreciated on photographs. The diagnostic problem of pre-clinical invasive cervical cancer can be largely solved by colposcopy. Many lesions which may be missed by naked eye inspection, palpation or probing are found to be obvious overt invasive lesions on colposcopy and this facilitate biopsy.

All these lesions plus miscellaneous lesions like condylomata are described adequately. Special chapters are devoted to recent advances and to vaginal adenosis. The appearance of the cervix and vagina in women exposed in utero to DES has been very ably written by Duane Townsend. We, in India, have very little experience of this condition.

Needless to say many difficulties are

experienced in interpreting findings, particularly as the epithelium tends to be dynamic, unstable and may not look the same at subsequent check-up. I was happy to note an entire section devoted to these difficulties.

The proponents of colposcopy have time and again emphasised the practical value of colposcopy. But the fact remains that not many have taken to this instrument. Perhaps the time has not been ripe so far. But now the emphasis has shifted from advanced to early cases. The authors amply clarify this position and suggest a "practical compromise" by restricting colposcopic examinations to all women with abnormal cervical cytology. Routine screening of normal women is recommended for training colposcopists.

Limitations of colposcopy are basically the high cost of instruments, lack of availability and lack of trained personnel and not at all due to false negative reports. Reduction in the number of cone biopsies and conservative treatment of lesions upto CIS are possible and safe only in clinics where reliable colposcopic facilities exist. The authors discuss very frankly the difficulties and limitations of this diagnostic tool. Moreover, the authors succeed in bringing out the fascinating morphology of the cervical epithelium in health and disease. In revealing this beauty, the colposcope is second only to the scanning electron microscope.

Practising colposcopists in India are few. However, that does not mean that the appeal of this book would be limited in India. It will be read with pleasure by all those involved in the research and management of cancer cervix. Even a

cursory glance through the beautiful photographs will immediately create a serious interest in the subject. This book is an absolute must for all Post-Graduate Reference Libraries, not only of Departments of Gynaecology but to those of Pathology, Cancer Hospitals and Cancer Research Centres. To those directly involved with the problem of early cervical cancer, this book will go

beyond being a reference manual to becoming a constant companion.

If anything can be said to be lacking, it is the absence of any coloured photographs. But this defect can be excused immediately knowing full well that inclusion of these would have been feasible but not without increasing prohibitively the publishing costs.

(Usha B. Saraiya)