

Book Review

Therapeutics in Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology - a symposium (Ed) B. K. H. Nair and P. A. Sarojini, pp. 54

This cute little manuscript is a pleasant surprise. It is a surprise because the writing habit among Indian workers is very rare. And it is pleasant because academically, it has been done very well. The first chapter deals with systemic corticosteroids and covers all the aspects quite thoroughly, including the indications for their use and warnings about their over-use. Other aspects of corticosteroid therapy are also well covered, but while going through it, one gets the impression that the author belongs to the conservative group of therapists. Otherwise, it is difficult to understand why the author wants to recommend corticosteroids only rarely in acute contact dermatitis. The next chapter on topical corticosteroids also shows the same conservative attitude, because once again corticosteroids have been recommended for only 'later states of contact dermatitis' or 'irritant dermatitis'. Inclusion for DLE among the list of less responsive dermatoses is also debatable. Apart from this, the chapter is very much up-to-date and deserves appreciation. It has been rightly stressed that systemic effects of locally applied corticosteroids are seen largely when extensive surface areas are treated and put under occlusion. The reviewer however, differs from the authors when they mention use of occlusive dressing over exudative areas. In a hot and humid climate so widely prevalent in our country, occlusion is likely to result in more frequent complications and should therefore be avoided. Chapter 3 deals with antibiotics and covers their indications, contra-indications and toxic effects. It also contains a strong note against the over-use and misuse of antibiotics. The possibility of emergence of multi-drug resistance has been rightly stressed. The only uncomfortable aspect of this chapter is the relatively larger number of printing errors which could have been easily avoided. Chapter 4 is very short and crisp account of antihistamines, but some antihistamines are not included. Chapter 5 completes the therapy of dermatological diseases, and includes prescriptions for commonly used medications. The author however, has ignored the information that salicylic acid added to a paste containing zinc oxide becomes ineffective because of formation of zinc salicylate. Moreover, creams have been discussed separately from emulsions forgetting that creams are also emulsions of oil in water or water in oil. Further more, there is still a tendency to use terms such as an ounce instead of the now legally adopted metric system. The bucket size (40 litres) mentioned on page 39 is perhaps too big for the commonly used buckets. Chapters 5 and 6 respectively deal with the treatment of venereal diseases and leprosy, providing very clear cut outlines for treatment. The need to use multiple drugs for all cases of lepromatous and dimorphous leprosy and avoiding use of low doses of dapsone to help prevent the emergence of resistance to dapsone has been very rightly stressed.

Going through the whole book which is written in a very simple language, one finds very little to criticize and much more to appreciate. And bearing in mind the difficulties encountered in undertaking such a task in our country, such as poor library facilities, erratic typing and irresponsible printing, one cannot help but stand up in salute to the various contributors and the Kerala Branch as a whole for their tremendous effort. They have shown their academic worth and we can all express our gratitude by extensively benefiting from their effort.

— J. S. Pasricha

Clinical Methods in Dermatology and Venereology, 2nd Ed.

**J. S. Pasricha, Arnold - Heinemann Publishers (India) Pvt. Ltd.,
New Delhi, 1978. pp 94, Rs. 13.50**

Dr. J. S. Pasricha deserves congratulation for bringing out the second edition of his book "Clinical Methods in Dermatology and Venereology". Dr. Pasricha's style of writing is simple and fluent and he has made the subject easy to grasp. There are six chapters including one for Venereology and one for Leprosy. The appendix gives all the details of the clinical and laboratory tests that are done in this speciality.

The book is well illustrated with photographs, diagrams and sketches, which make understanding easy. However some of the photographs are not sharp and could be replaced. Some statements are debatable. In chapter 3 mention must be made of cutaneous markers of internal disorders and also skin changes associated with various systemic disorders. The magnification or the low power and high power views of photomicrograph must be mentioned. The appendix can also include the technique of skin biopsy which is easily done in the department.

Dr. Pasricha has done a laudable job. The book will be particularly useful to an undergraduate who enters the department of Dermatology & Venereology for the first time. The speciality has its own way of history taking and examination of the patient and from this point of view even the general practitioners and post-graduate students will find the book informative and useful. This excellent book is subsidised for which the Central Government deserves our compliments. In the present day of soaring prices, the book is within the reach of prospective buyer.

— C. K. Jagavkar