anxious slightly thyrotoxic look. There are curious omissions, i.e. the lack of mention of hypocalcaemia and tetany in rickets and osteomalacia. Nevertheless, for the general medical man wanting to acquire a relatively simplified view of the speciality of bone disease, this book could be a useful buy. It is not a book for the expert in the field.

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Clinical Uses of Cerebral, Brainstem and Spinal Somatosensory Evoked Potentials
(Progress in Clinical Neurophysiology, vol 7)
J E Desmedt (ed) pp 354 SFr 138
Basel: Karger 1979

This book falls into two sections. The first, which is largely technical in nature, describes cortical and far-field sensory evoked potentials in normal human subjects. Computing techniques now seem to be sufficiently powerful that very small potentials can be recorded from the scalp or, in the case of the electrospinogram, from the skin overlaying the spinal column. The question as to what all these waves mean is much more difficult, but the second half of the book, referring to clinical applications, at least documents the changes that occur in various neurological disorders. Some of the techniques will probably pass into routine clinical practice, as has the recording of the visual evoked responses. For example, Matthews and Small have been able to demonstrate a somatosensory abnormality in some patients with early multiple sclerosis, using the electrospinogram, when such an abnormality cannot be detected clinically by recording the evoked potential from the scalp. As has happened in scalp electroencephalography, the technical possibilities of recording evoked responses are far in advance of biological understanding. However, it is probable that animal experiments will continue to clarify the situation.

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A Patient's Guide to Dialysis and Transplantation. Roger Gabriel
pp 128 £4.95 Lancaster: MTP Press 1980

Most patients faced with a diagnosis of terminal renal failure find that they have innumerable questions about their condition and its treatment. These have to be answered not only for humanitarian reasons but also because there can be few branches of medicine in which the patient undertakes so much of his own care. This book is designed to answer these questions and a copy could well be given to each new patient starting treatment by dialysis or transplantation and form a basis for subsequent discussion between the patient, his family and the staff of the renal unit. The book could also be read by the numerous people who, though not directly involved with the medical care of these patients, need nevertheless to know something about the principles and potential of treatment. These include community workers, social workers, student nurses who are developing a particular project and even fund raisers.

Criticisms are few and of relatively minor importance. In particular, it seems unnecessary to dwell on the causes of renal failure and, since this is not a home dialysis manual, the detailed description of the technique of haemodialysis could also be omitted. Dr Gabriel has generally been careful to avoid being too specific about details of treatment which may vary from one unit to the next; but occasionally such details do intrude and the staff of many units may be surprised to learn that most patients on hospital dialysis receive only two treatments per week and never get treated on Sundays!

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Handbook of Hypnosis and Psychosomatic Medicine
G D Burrows & L Dennerstein (ed) pp 554
Price not stated Amsterdam: Elsevier 1980

This is an interesting and informative book in a field of medicine which is still regarded as 'fringe' by many doctors and dentists. There are 27 chapters written by different contributors who are all well known internationally. Some chapters are extremely good and contribute original thinking; others review comprehensively the literature on the use of hypnosis.

From the clinician's viewpoint it was disappointing to find that while a detailed account of post-hypnotic amnesia is included, there is no chapter on other hypnotic phenomena which could be of more practical use in clinical practice. However, some chapters are written with great clarity and will be of value to both the novice and the expert. Amongst these are contributions from Orne, Hilgard and Graham Burrows, one of the editors. The chapters on pain are extremely valuable and will be of particular interest to those attached to a pain clinic. The use of hypnosis in the psychiatric field is covered in an outstanding chapter which, it is to be hoped, might stimulate some psychiatrists to master hypnotic techniques.

Despite some reservations, I think this is a first class book; anyone in the field of hypnosis would be bound to benefit from reading it.

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