The introductory chapter on the principles of emergency medicine includes a helpful section on sedation and general anaesthesia with important guidance for the discharge of patients who have received sedative drugs in the emergency department. Following an outline of the management of major trauma and multiple injuries, the text proceeds in a logical anatomical manner through injuries to the head, face and neck: the trunk (including chest and abdomen) and upper and lower limbs, with a separate chapter covering the hand. Cardiac arrest, chest pain, respiratory distress, collapse and sudden illness are followed by abdominal pain, obstetric, gynaecological, genito-urinary and perineal problems before moving on to sensitively constructed chapters on children's problems, disturbed patients and medicolegal aspects of emergency medicine.

The penultimate chapter on small wounds and localised infections emphasises that 'small does not mean trivial' and covers a comprehensive field including transmission of blood-borne viruses very succinctly. The concluding section covering ophthalmic, ENT and dental conditions together with facial pain reminds us that over 5% of emergency department attendances involve eye-related problems. The comprehensive index extends over 20 pages and helpfully has separate italicised entries referring to figures and tables.

Although aimed at undergraduates, junior doctors on foundation programmes, trainees in accident and emergency medicine, and doctors and nurses in the primary care setting, there is little doubt that this book will have a wider interest for those in early years surgical training and for more senior colleagues wishing to update themselves in the management of patients presenting with acute conditions outside their immediate field of specialist expertise.

Laboratory Skills for Science and Medicine

MAXINE LINTERN

EXTENT P/H	136 pages, Paperback
PRICE/ISBN	£19.95, 1846190169
PUBLISHER	Radcliffe (Abingdon), 2006
REVIEWER	Hashim Uddin Ahmed
STAR RATING	****

The author should be congratulated for writing this overview of laboratory skills that, to my knowledge, has not been covered in any other publication. It is something that has been sorely needed by the countless postgraduates and clinical research fellows who have wished to venture into the painstaking discovery of new knowledge. Written for any student at any level who is about to embark on such a project within a scientific laboratory, it should provide a new surgical research fellow with a welcome practical bridge from clinical work to basic science.

Written in an informal and friendly manner, the book is divided into two sections. Section one covers basic concepts

such as laboratory safety, chemical concepts, design and management of experiments, record keeping and scientific writing. Section two covers actual biomedical techniques such as Western blotting, ELISA, histological techniques, immunostaining, cell culture, Northern and Southern blotting, polymerase chain reaction (PCR), microarray and finally the use of animals. Every chapter gives a practical overview, which will help overcome the initial sense of abandonment one may feel when starting a research project and that other books in molecular biology distinctly miss.

However, I disagree with the author's assertion that it can be used as a day-to-day guide that the student can continuously come back to as the detail is just not there. For example, in the description of making a primer for PCR. Nevertheless, a good laboratory supervisor can help to build on what the book provides. In addition, guidance on writing grant applications within the scientific writing chapter would be useful. The reader is, however, provided with useful references (mainly websites), which will aid in filling out the details in a way in which traditional publications cannot.

Overall, I would recommend this book for those starting in a new laboratory. It does what it says in the title and provides an introduction and a bridge into what can be an overwhelming start to a new research career.

High Altitude Medicine and Physiology, 4th edn

JOHN B WEST, ROBERT B SCHOENE, JAMES S MILLEDGE

EXTENT P/H	484 pages, Hardback
PRICE/ISBN	£79.00, 9780340913444
PUBLISHER	Hodder Arnold (London), 2007
REVIEWER	Tim Clarke
STAR RATING	*****

This is the fourth edition of this definitive text book on high-altitude medicine and physiology. The editorial team has changed since the third edition with the retirement of Michael Ward and the introduction of Robert B Schoene. The text has undergone some major changes with some prudent pruning to limit the increase in size. Sections, for example on cold injury, not limited to the high-altitude environment have been reduced allowing the introduction and expansion of sections on genetics, women and children at altitude and the effect of co-existing disease at high altitude. All three of the editors are not only accomplished academics and clinicians but have carried out many field studies, which is almost always a hostile activity at high altitude. Many of the experiments forming the groundwork knowledge in the area have been carried out by teams that included and were led by the editors.

The book is arranged into 30 chapters, from the history of the study of physiology and illness at altitude to the practicalities of