

BOOK REVIEW

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Bryceson, A. and Pfaltzgraff, R. E. *Leprosy for Students of Medicine*, Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 15-17 Teviot Place, Edinburgh EH1 2XX, 1973, 152 pp, illustrated. Price 1.50 £.

This paperback summary on leprosy was written particularly for medical students and inexpensively published to make it readily available for such students in any part of the world who are reasonably competent in English reading. It is the first of a proposed series of similar books on "Medicine in the Tropics."

The 141 pages of text and illustrations in the book present a nice balance between understanding of pathology and clinical medicine. Brevity, however, necessitates statements with lack of discussion in a number of areas and thus the inevitability of some positive statements that are subject to questions. As an example, on page 63 it is stated in relation to both the Fernandez and Mitsuda response to leprosy that "a positive test indicates the presence of delayed hypersensitivity to antigens of *M. leprae* and nothing else . . ." Likewise, considerably more is known about the means of the spread of leprosy than is indicated. Epidemiologic and other studies present much reasonable information even though not yet supported by experimental animal studies. Likewise, the

effectiveness of "chemotherapeutic segregation" in leprosy control and prevention seems understated. These notes are but examples of the type of areas that teachers in leprosy will wish to expand by discussion.

The African orientation of this book results in illustrations which, in a number of instances, are not optimally informative due to lack of contrast between lesions and skin.

Unfortunately there are a considerable number of misprints and some misspellings such as the word "haematoxylin" which is consistently presented as "haematoxalin." Since the work is prepared for medical students, in particular, it may be hoped that the next edition will exercise care in this respect.

On the whole, this is a useful and creditable effort which by its clear, though somewhat dogmatic presentation, will be of value in introducing the subject to medical students, particularly in the African area.

Unfortunately the copy just received for review was accompanied by the statement that the first edition has been exhausted. Fortunately, a revised edition is currently in preparation. Some of the immunologic concepts relating to leprosy, though well stated, are already out of date in this rapidly developing area of investigation. The new edition will provide opportunity for updating.—Olaf K. Skinsnes