**Book Reviews**

**B.J. Phillips et al.**

*Manual of Echocardiographic Techniques*

Understanding of the basic concepts of ultrasound and of the techniques of performing echocardiographic studies is essential for correct interpretation of echocardiograms. This book by Phillips deals with the basic aspects of M-mode echocardiography in adult cardiac patients. This volume has 12 chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the basic concepts and physical properties of ultrasound. Chapters 2 and 3 present the method of performing an echocardiographic examination. Chapters 4 through 12 provide the technique of recording the various cardiac structures by M-mode echocardiography. There is no discussion of the newer two-dimensional techniques.

This is a practical, small, concise book that deals with salient features of M-mode echocardiography. The text is clear and easy to read. The illustrations are abundant, well selected and of excellent technical quality. Each chapter has appended a good selection of references. This book cannot be considered a comprehensive text on echocardiography. However, it is an excellent introductory book on adult M-mode echocardiography and is warmly recommended to beginners seeking a fundamental introduction to this field.

Natesa G. Pandian, Iowa City, Iowa

**J.S. Alpert, J.M. Rippe**

*Manual of Cardiovascular Diagnosis and Therapy*

At last – a clinician’s vade mecum that has vastly more than a little of everything. Those familiar with Joseph Alpert’s work and particularly his ‘Manual of Coronary Care’ will not be disappointed in this masterpiece of compactness. No aspect of heart disease is overlooked in a carefully drafted, well-written handbook (not *Handbuch*), spanning 384 pages, including a detailed 25-page index. 28 chapters comprise its two Parts, ‘Introduction to the Cardiovascular System’ and ‘Specific Disorders’. Part I covers: physical examination; noninvasive methods; arrhythmias; heart failure; shock; syncope; cardiac arrest; exercise; psychological aspects of heart disease. Part II includes: hypertension; ischemic, valvular and congenital heart disease; cardiac myopathy and myocarditis; pericardial disease; infectious endocarditis; tumors; pulmonary embolism; cor pulmonale; trauma; pregnancy; noncardiac surgery in patients with heart disease. A separate chapter covers heart block and sick sinus syndrome. The text concludes with a thoughtful appendix, ‘Cardiac Involvement in Other Medical Conditions’. All the material is authoritative and the treatments current and definitive. It is hard to choose among the chapters for excellence, they are all so good. Chapter 15, for example, is a 20 page mini-monograph on congenital heart disease in adults with nicely proportioned allotment of text according to the importance and frequency of each lesion.
In a work of such scope it would be surprising to find complete absence of errors and lapses. Indeed it took a considerable effort to find the few that were unearthed. For example, the authors should emphasize that almost any organism can cause infectious endocarditis. The sick sinus syndrome and the brady-tachy syndrome are not synonymous though they are often coincident. In cor pulmonale, especially with obstructive heart disease, it is a moot point whether the ECG ‘usually’ shows right ventricular hypertrophy and right atrial enlargement (the latter no longer approved ECG terminology). The presence of Q waves or ST deviations does not reliably distinguish respectively transmural from nontransmural infarctions. Yet none of these are very serious flaws and they can be remedied in forthcoming editions (I predict many of them). This is no bare-bones approach. ‘Pocket’ dimensions, liberal use of tables, clear though small type effectively condensing a vast amount of information, and the visually pleasing outline-narrative format combine to make this manual literally a vade mecum, that is easily read and understood. This superb effort transcends the usual kind of ‘manual’. It is a mini-text which can be used with profit at any level of involvement with heart disease.


J.H.K. Vogel

Current Concepts in Clinical Cardiology

From the January, 1979 cardiovascular conference in Aspen, Colorado, this volume includes 32 papers by outstanding experts in five categories: high-altitude cardiology, non-invasive techniques, coronary artery disease, pediatric heart disease, valvular heart disease and clinical cardiology. Most of these necessarily cover restricted aspects of their subject. For example, noninvasive techniques includes three echocardiographic papers and two involving radionuclides (one of these entirely experimental). The relatively broad section on coronary artery disease considers electrocardiographic stress testing, antithrombotic therapy, cardiac rehabilitation, radionuclide evaluation, infarct size reduction, detection and management of the asymptomatic patient, management of stable and unstable angina (with observations from prospective controlled studies), a new approach to clinical decision making, one view of the effect of bypass surgery on longevity, the economics of surgery and medical treatment, prophylactic effect of exercise, and ‘Drug Carriers in Cardiovascular Pharmacology’. The five chapters on clinical cardiology include management of venous thromboembolism, vasodilators in heart failure, treatment of premature ventricular beats, spontaneous closure of residual ventricular septal defects and biochemical factors in ventricular arrhythmias during ischemia.

All the material is well written by acknowledged authorities, so that it is difficult to select for excellence any one contribution. Nevertheless, Froelicher’s three chapters covering echocardiographic studies in exercise, angiographic, hemodynamic and safety studies of cardiac rehabilitation, and the intriguing question of whether exercise protects from coronary artery disease achieve the usual standard set by this master investigator. The Duke University Group has submitted several outstanding chapters based on their extraordinary computerized statistical system. Martin and colleagues’ chapters on two-dimensional echo are equally good, as is Maroko and colleagues’ critical review of infarct size reduction. Wackers’ ‘Radionuclide
Evaluation of Patients in the Coronary Care Unit’ will be welcomed by those working in intensive care. Cardiologists interested in a well-executed potpourri of recent advances and state-of-the-art descriptions will find much of this book useful and all of it interesting. However, in United States terms, at least, they should be prepared to pay an excessive price for it.


A. Garson, P. Gillette, D.G. McNamara
A Guide to Cardiac Dysrhythmias in Children

Drs. Garson, Gillette, and McNamara have brought together an extremely useful and interesting collection of electrocardiograms in children. This work serves as an important atlas to identify most of the important arrhythmias seen in children.

The main strength of this work resides with an important inductive reasoned approach to the interpretation of the cardiac arrhythmia. Following several basic rules, the student can easily categorize and identify the cardiac arrhythmias. The algorithms used in the analysis of the cardiac arrhythmias is important for use both in children as well as adults. The electrocardiograms are of extremely high quality which considerably enhances the ability for interpretation.

Several comments in passing should be made regarding problems in the interpretation of the arrhythmias. Terminology such as complete right bundle branch block or complete heart block are generally not used in electrocardiography as one can never tell whether it is complete or incomplete. Generally, the interpretation of atrial tachycardia with block especially with 2:1 conduction ratios, cannot be categorized as to type I or type II AV block. In general, the behavior of the PR interval must be determined for such a differential diagnosis. Finally, flutter with varying conduction ratios usually does not constitute AV block as this is considered within the physiologic range of the AV conduction system.

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The atlas will serve as a useful and important treatise for both clinicians and students in the interpretation of cardiac arrhythmias in children. The approach to these arrhythmias will be served both for children as well as adults.


A. Righetti, A. Donath Cardiovascular Nuclear Medicine
Progress in Nuclear Medicine, vol. 6
Karger, Basel 1980
VIII + 228 pp.; SFr. 148.- ISBN 3-8055-0618-X

In this sixth volume of Progress in Nuclear Medicine an attempt has been made to summarize the main advances in the already broad field of Nuclear Cardiology. Although in such short space it is impossible to cover everything and the format of different writers jeopardizes coherence, an effort has been made to guide the reader straight from the anatomy and physiology (which is extremely well done) to the application of the techniques themselves. For instance, the coronary blood flow and its regulation are followed by the methods that explore myocardial perfusion from the biokinetics of thallium, covered by Beller, to the actual clinical application, by Thobaugh and Hamilton.
Every chapter though is in itself a unit with different style and characteristics presenting mainly
the author’s experience and reviewing the current literature with uneven completeness. In
general, the reader will find an in-depth analysis of the technique and its application to the
clinical situation. Because of the technical aspects, the cardiologist may find it too theoretical or
the nuclear medicine physician too physiological; in essence, that is nuclear cardiology, and
almost all chapters reflect the need of considerable technical knowledge proportional to
cardiovascular physiology.

Besides the previously mentioned studies of myocardial perfusion, Barodi and Massed cover the
fashionable topic of rest and vasospastic angina, but not always with ideal clarity. The subject is
completed by Canon with an elegant and technical exposition of the measurement of coronary
blood flow myocardial perfusion by intracoronary techniques. The subject of ventricular function
is well reviewed and chapters by Shelbert and Borer are equally linked to the introductory
chapter by Peterson.

A review of imaging with infarct-avid agents and its clinical application is well done despite
overemphasizing its usefulness. The chapter describing the application of radionuclides to
congenital heart disease describes with some detail the techniques used in shunt detection in the
applications of myocardial perfusion imaging for pediatric purposes. Finally, a very technical
chapter on positron tomography of the heart describes the applications and limitations of this
sophisticated technique, particularly in the assessment of metabolic changes. A summary
reviewing the clinical applications of radioisotopes in the diagnosis of cardiovascular disease
ends the volume.

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The book is well edited and the illustrations are good excepting a few thallium reproductions in
the chapter by Barodi and Masseri. In summary, an interested reader will find a well-done
volume that reviews in depth the main problems in nuclear cardiology by well-known
researchers.

V.F. Froelicher, San Diego, Calif.

G.F.O. Tyers et al.

Self-Assessment of Current Knowledge in Cardiothoracic Surgery,

2nd ed.

Medical Examination Publ. Co., Garden City 1980

292 pp.; US$ 18.00

ISBN 0-87488-276-1

This collection of multiple-choice questions on ‘Cardiothoracic Surgery’ covers acquired and
congenital heart disease, conditions of the lung, oesophagus and great vessels as well as thoracic
trauma. Multiple-choice questions are widely used for the objective assessment of medical
students and, therefore, most physicians are acquainted with them. On the other hand, the
construction of multiple-choice questions is not always easy, as it becomes evident from a few
examples in this edition. The knowledge of the precise incidence of a certain phenomenon seems
to be of secondary value in assessing someone’s understanding of a medical specialty; this type
of knowledge, however, can be tested very easily by the multiple-choice system. The text is not
absolutely free of errors, e.g. the sinoatrial node is said to be located in the posterior wall of the
left atrium in question 76 (first part). Generalised statements about operative indications in
uncommon congenital heart disease with variable surgical results are hazardous. Thus, in the
reviewers opinion, the majority of experienced heart surgeons or cardiologists would not include
Ebstein’s anomaly with tricuspid insufficiency’ in ‘the congenital cardiac lesions that should be repaired when discovered in adults’ (question 145, part 1).

Most questions, however, lead the attention to very important practical problems and enable the reader to assess this know-how in thoracic surgery; the reference accompanying each question provides him with easy access to the original papers underlying the questions. Therefore, this book is highly recommended for self-assessment in thoracic surgery to surgeons, anaesthesiologists and even to cardiologists interested in this field.

M. Rothlin, Zurich