Lecture Notes on Sexually Transmitted Diseases. By R Nicol Thin, 1982. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford. Pp 260. Price £7.25.

This new and welcome addition to the "Lecture Notes" series is primarily intended for medical students. It conforms to the style of previous volumes, which have long been appreciated by both undergraduates and postgraduates for their value in facilitating rapid learning and in revision. The text is clear and concise, giving due emphasis to the most important aspects, with much material being presented in tabular or list form. As a result this small book provides a comprehensive picture of sexually transmitted diseases and other conditions presenting to physicians in genitourinary medicine.

The initial chapters give details of the organisation of clinic services, a general description of their epidemiology and methods of control, and a useful section on

clinical methods. The chapters on individual diseases are clearly set out with sections on their epidemiology, pathology, clinical features, diagnosis, and management. There are excellent chapters on the venereal diseases, particularly the descriptions of the late complications of syphilis. The growing importance of the other sexually transmitted diseases is given proper emphasis, as are the non-infective disorders which commonly present to our clinics. There is a short but useful section on the particular problems of STD in homosexual men. The absence of clinical photographs is partially compensated for by the inclusion of several drawings with accompanying descriptions in the text. These do have a variable quality, however—being at their best in the sections on syphilis. The drawings of genital ulcers and of the microscopical appearances of smears are of little value.

Criticisms are few and minor. Although the clear dogmatic style will appeal to students wishing to assimilate facts quickly,

more established clinicians may find some opinions contentious: for example, the recommendations that clinic staff should include a social worker in addition to a health adviser and that routine microscopy of centrifuged urine be performed in all male patients; the insistence on the knee-elbow position for proctoscopic examination of homosexual men; and the failure to advise routinely systemic treatment for neonatal chlamydial disease. References for further reading would have been helpful.

These comments should not detract, however, from the many virtues of this book, which will doubtless be well received by medical students. Its publication now, at a time when the need for improved undergraduate training in genitourinary medicine has been urged, is particularly timely. This excellent book can also be recommended to postgraduate recruits to the specialty and to nursing staff, and is good value at its current price of £7.25.

G R Kinghorn

Sexually Transmitted Diseases. By R C Noble, 1982. Medical Examination Publishing Co, London. Pp 224 and index. Price £6.

Dr Noble must be gratified that the demand for his book has necessitated a second edition. He has taken the opportunity to revise it and in doing so has increased its size by 65 pages. New chapters have been included, which deal with Behçets disease, Reiter's syndrome, cytomegalovirus infection, pelvic inflammatory disease, and pelvic actinomycosis. Having reviewed the first edition in this journal I was interested to see in what way the second edition had been improved.

The author states in his introduction that he spent a sabbatical year in Rotterdam and has used some of the excellent illustrations produced in Dr E Stolz's department there, which have been published by Boehringer Ingelheim. Hopefully most venereologists had their attention drawn to this publication by a notice that appeared in this journal in August 1980 and have obtained a copy. They will thus be able to see some of Dr Noble's black and white illustrations in colour. Some of the illustrations from the previous edition are still included. They have been enlarged with an increase in clarity.

Despite his European experience the approach, and particularly the therapeutic regimens, are obviously American and would not necessarily be those used in Britain. It is unfortunate that this parochialism will limit the book's usefulness, as some of the chapters are very instructive. The first chapter is one such and is a good introduction to patient management.

The chapter on gonococcal infections gives a complete coverage of the various aspects found in clinical practice. The treatment of penicillinase-producing strains with spectinomycin is stressed. I still think that one post-treatment examination only is inadequate, although in this the author quotes the United States Public Health Service recommendations. I am still convinced that proctoscopy is necessary in homosexual men and is preferable to taking a blind swab from the rectum. His epidemiological data are taken from the United States where there is no compulsory notification system. I would have thought that the British figures which have been available for many years could have been of more use to him.

The author then deals with NGU, trichomoniasis, and infections due to *Candida* and *Gardnerella* concisely and thoroughly with the most recent therapeutic recommendations. Herpes virus infection is also covered in detail. I was surprised that the

laser and cryoprobe were not included as destroyers of the genital wart, though the risks of podophyllin are stressed.

The chapter on syphilis is a bit of a "curate's egg". The coverage of early syphilis is adequate, but neurosyphilis is covered in only one paragraph, as is cardiovascular syphilis; congenital syphilis merits two. I realise that some books on sexually transmitted diseases are criticised for excessive coverage of an uncommon illness, but without more detail the "great imitator" will catch some of the readers of this book unawares. The instructions for obtaining darkfield specimens are clear, although it might help if more detail were given on collecting specimens from within the rectum or vagina. The treatment schedules again are those of the United States Public Health Service, and in early syphilis are unlikely to give adequate concentrations in the cerebrospinal fluid, should this be required. He recommends intravenous penicillin for neurosyphilis and a dose of prednisolone for congenital syphilitic deafness that would rapidly cause Cushingoid symptoms.

The very good chapter on "gay bowel" in the previous edition has been enlarged to cover hepatitis B. Unfortunately this edition predates the large number of papers on immune deficiency states in this group.

This chapter is followed by two good chapters on lice and scabies infestations. The chapters on pelvic inflammatory disease and pelvic actinomycosis are new. Chlamydial pelvic infection seems to be less common, or possibly less often recognised, than in Britain. A new chapter on Reiter's syndrome has been included and gives a very clear description of the disease, although I would not agree with his

therapeutic recommendations. Another useful new chapter is the one on Behçet's syndrome. The other rarer conditions seen in venereology departments are described in a new chapter. He has also included one on prophylaxis, which gives a very interesting view of the problems of advertising condoms in the United States in the past.

This new edition is a more complete guide to sexually transmitted diseases and

the author should be pleased with the results of his labours, as many of the criticisms of the first edition no longer apply. The book's usefulness in Britain, however, is less certain. I still think it should be read by venereologists practising in Europe, as it gives them an insight into American clinical practice.

G D Morrison

Notice

New association of science editors

A new association of science editors was founded on 14 May. The European Association of Science Editors (EASE) is the result of a merger at their conference in Pau, France, between the former European Life Science Editors' Association (ELSE) and the European Association of Earth Science Editors (EDITERRA).

Besides continuing publication of *Earth*

& *Life Science Editing* every four months, the new association will expand its programme of regular conferences and workshops. The next workshop will be held in York on 4-5 November 1982; it is hoped to have a further workshop in 1983, and there will be a joint conference with the Council of Biology Editors at Trinity College, Cambridge, in September 1984. Membership is open to all editors and those working in the dissemination of scientific knowledge.

The first president of EASE is Dr Stephen Lock, Editor, *British Medical Journal*, and the vice-president, Professor Paul Fogelberg, of the University of Helsinki, who is editor of *Boreas*. Further information may be obtained from the secretary/treasurer, Miss Nancy Morrison, PO Box 33, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 3JX, UK (Tel 0252 723945).