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## Book review

**Venereal Diseases.** By A King, C Nicol, and P Rodin, 1980. Baillière Tindall, London. 4th edition. Pp 419. Price £14.00.

It is a difficult task to review an institution, especially when it reaches a fourth edition. At first glance nothing seems to change. The somewhat conservative views of the authors come to the fore in the preface, but once the text is tackled this edition is found to be just as good as previous editions and has managed to keep up to date.

Over 40% of the book is devoted to syphilis. Some may argue that nowadays this disease is only a small proportion of a venereologist's work, but I would say that at least one textbook in English must be the standard work on syphilis, and for this reason the comprehensive coverage is required.

In the section on the history of syphilis—although the passage on the recent controversy on Hunter's experiment is welcome—two mistakes remain from the first edition. Fracastorius's poem was written in 1530 not 1521. Ulrich von Hutton is a peculiar way of spelling Hutten. In the last part of the book on tests for mental status in the diagnosis of general paralysis of the insane, "date of beginning of World War II and Adolf Hitler" may require, in 1980, more than a good memory. I suppose it is the passage of time but the clarity of plates is not as good in this edition as in the first, although figure 106—a new entry—an electron microscopic photograph of the gonococcus is superb. It is a pity that the authors condemn epidemiological treatment of syphilis so readily; most clinicians could think of several reasons for its use.

The section on gonorrhoea has been rewritten, and descriptions of its sequelae and the up-to-the-minute methods of treatment are very good.

The section on non-specific genital infection is succinct and superb. The minor sexually transmitted diseases and their differential diagnoses are well covered, although it is a pity that there is less than a page on hepatitis B and less than three lines on sexually transmitted gastrointestinal parasite infections.

The authors are to be congratulated that references are as up to date as to include 1979. The strength of the text gains from its orthodox approach to the subject. The new edition is essential to everyone interested in venereology.

Michael Waugh

## Notices

## International Society for STD Research

The Fourth Meeting of the International Society for STD Research on "Sexually Transmitted Diseases" will be held in Heidelberg, West Germany, from 18-20 October 1981. Abstracts should be submitted by 30 June 1981 to Professor Dr D Petzoldt, Universitäts-Hautklinik, Voßstr 2, D-6900 Heidelberg, West Germany.

## Cervical pathology and colposcopy

The Fourth World Congress for Cervical Pathology and Colposcopy will be held in London from 13-17 October 1981. For further information apply to: CPC Secretariat, Caroline Roney Medical Conference Organisers, 100 Park Road, London NW1 4RN (telephone: 01-723 6722).

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