Book reviews

Recent Advances in Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Edited by R. S. MORTON and J. R. W. HARRIS. 1975. Pp. 420, 27 figs, 7 tables, index. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh (£10.00)

In 1964 Ambrose King's 'Recent Advances in Venereology' was published; this was, and is, a classic in the literature of the subject. However, ten years is a long time in medicine today: a new volume was due and has been eagerly awaited. This has now appeared. 'Venereology' has become 'Sexually Transmitted Diseases', and the inclusion of chapters on candidosis, genital herpes, genital warts, molluscum contagiosum, and sexually transmitted protozoa and helminths gives a good indication of the broadening scope of the specialty. The editors have even devoted chapters to infections by some micro-organisms whose sexual transmission, or pathogenicity, is unproved, such as the virus of hepatitis B, *Corynebacterium vaginale*, and cytomegalovirus.

Drs. Morton and Harris provide a comprehensive review of the world literature on sexually transmitted diseases from 1965 to 1973, having had the assistance of seven distinguished colleagues on certain topics. A generally high standard has been maintained. In the section on gonorrhoea, Dr. Jephcott's chapter on advances in laboratory procedures and Professor McEntegart's account of fundamental research developments are of particular interest. Dr. Wilkinson's chapters on serological tests for syphilis and immunity in syphilis are models of their kind, and Mr. Rowntree is stimulating on the subject of health education.

Inevitably, in a book of this kind, some overlap has occurred. The chapters on the epidemiological and social aspects of gonorrhoea and syphilis could, with advantage, have been combined with the later sections devoted to the control of venereal diseases, and in the section on non-specific genital infection the role of the mycoplasmas and of *Chlamydia* is discussed twice within a few pages, once by Dr. Morton and once by Dr. Dunlop. There are a number of incorrect spellings, including some authors' names, and on a few occasions authors have not been correctly quoted. Some stated references are not correct, and there are too many misprints (including one in the table of contents!).

These minor criticisms do not diminish the importance of this book or its value to all who are concerned with the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. The editors are to be congratulated on the success of their laborious undertaking.

J. D. Oriel

Venereal Disease Control: A Survey of Recent Legislation. 1975. (Offprint from *International Digest of Health Legislation* (1975), Vol. 26, No. 1). Pp 44. WHO, Geneva. (Sw. frs 8) (published also in French)

This is the second world-wide survey of venereal disease legislation under WHO auspices, the previous one which covered 44 countries having been published in 1956. Earlier surveys had been made by the then International Union against the Venereal Diseases.

This more recent survey is of similar length to its predecessor (44 pages) and is entitled 'Venereal Disease Control' rather than 'Venereal Diseases'; both have been written in a manner designed to make an essentially rather indigestible subject palatable and easy to assimilate.

The present volume does not attempt to undertake a complete revision of earlier studies but rather concentrates on amendments made in the legislation of some 33 countries, excluding the United Kingdom, since the late 1950s. Sixteen of those selected are in Europe (6 in eastern Europe), nine in the Americas, four in Africa (including Madagascar), three in Australasia (including Fiji), and one in the Middle East (Israel). Discussion is presented under the following headings: venereal diseases covered by legislation; obligation of patients and suspects and duties of the physician; systematic notification; notification of persons refusing to undergo prescribed treatment and defaulters; tracing and notification of sources of infection and contacts; notification by laboratories; diagnosis of venereal diseases, certificates of cure, etc.; premarital examinations; prenatal examinations; employment and venereal diseases; infecting or exposing another person to infection; persons qualified to treat venereal diseases; advertising of antivenereal remedies; treatment of minors and incompetent persons; compulsory hospitalization; and, finally, organization of venereal disease control. Missing, however, is reference to legislation concerning prostitution and homosexuality, the former in the earlier survey having been considered to fall within the competence of the Department of Social Affairs of the United Nations.

Legislation relating to employment is of particular interest, although little, if anything, is discussed concerning screening tests on immigrants, perhaps considered as being the province of the ILO. In Poland, for example, persons suffering from infectious syphilis are prohibited from engaging in a number of occupations, including hairdressers, bath attendants, stewards on ships or in aircraft, conductors in public passenger transport, and