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BOOK REVIEWS

Herpes—What it is and how to cope. By Adrian Mindel and Orla Carney. London: Optima, (pp 85, £6.99). 1991. ISBN 0 356 18087 3.

At last, a book in print which deals with the subject of herpes aimed specifically at the individual infected.

Adrian Mindel and Orla Carney have set out to dispel myths and present the facts about herpes without causing panic or unnecessary stress. The book covers all aspects of the disease in a factual and understanding manner and there is an equal mix of up to date information and self help. The text includes the whole spectrum of herpes with sections on virology, transmission, clinical picture, diagnosis, treatments, associated problems, psychological aspects concluding with self help and support. Each section is presented in a clear concise way.

Herpes is an ever increasing problem in society and for many people diagnosed it can have devastating effects both psychologically and sexually. Until now most of the

literature available has either been too medically orientated or not detailed enough to satisfy the client's need for knowledge. The advantage of this book is that it addresses the problems of herpes in an holistic way combining a vast amount of information in a logical order.

Obviously this is a tremendous resource for clients, although a word of caution is needed—the first section deals with virology in some depth; some clients may be deterred by the amount of medical terminology. It is worthwhile pointing out that subsequent sections are more readable. This book is a definite must for clinic and practice libraries.

Owing to the quality of information contained in this book I would also recommend it to staff working with clients who have herpes. It deals so thoroughly with the psychology of herpes, highlighting many problems which perhaps to a non sufferer are not apparent. The section on treatments is extremely detailed and covers a whole spectrum of drug therapy, but is carefully complemented with a section on self help. The reference to support groups is invaluable to both clients and staff alike.

My overall impression of this book is that it could have an important role in the education and management of people with herpes and is a useful aid to discussion and counselling. Like all of the Positive Health guides it is easy to read, technical but without being boring.

KATE EMERSON

Recent Advances in Sexually Transmitted Diseases and AIDS. Edited by JRW Harris and SM Forster (Pp 275; £29.50). Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1991. ISBN 9-443-04123-7.

At the time of being asked to review this book I had already leafed through a volume at our local academic bookshop and was seriously considering whether to obtain my own copy or to encourage and wait for the department to buy one. It was therefore with great pleasure that I set about reading the copy that arrived courtesy of *Genitourinary Medicine*.

The book is the fourth in this series of *Recent Advances*. To reflect the growing importance of HIV infection the title of the series has been revised.

The format as with previous issues is that of a number of review articles. In the 11 chapters a wide range of subjects are covered, virtually all of relevance to daily genitourinary practice. The contents are about equally divided between HIV related topics and other sexually transmitted diseases. Most of the contributors are UK based, many of whom are distinguished "household names".

Topics covered include: common clinical AIDS manifestations, HTLV 1 and 2 infection, prostitution, intravenous drug use, prostatitis, sexually transmitted diseases in the third world, and the diagnosis and treatment of gonorrhoea and chlamydial infection.

Most of the articles are well written and excellently referenced. A model review is that by Professor Taylor Robinson who in 44 pages draws together over 360 references mostly of work in the last five years. He covers clinical aspects of genital chlamydial infection as well as developments in diagnostic methods and current treatment regimes.

Of the sections that deal with HIV related problems a number of articles are particularly noteworthy. The section on injection drug use and HIV written by Dr Brettle and his colleagues in Edinburgh is packed with practical insights and should appeal to anyone who deals with the occasional intravenous drug user. The review includes an extensive discussion of the development of HIV in the IVDU population around Europe and a collation of the limited data on IVDU and HIV in prisons.

Advances in our understanding and refinements for the treatment of HIV infection are being made rapidly. It is therefore not surprising that certain sections, particularly those on clinical management of AIDS, already appear a little dated. However, both the sections on *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia and on Kaposi's sarcoma do still provide highly readable and concise accounts of developments to the start of last year.

In the short time I have had this book I have found it both interesting and useful. I have referred to it a number of times to get a reference or to bring up to date a lecture to students or staff (I have even attended a meeting