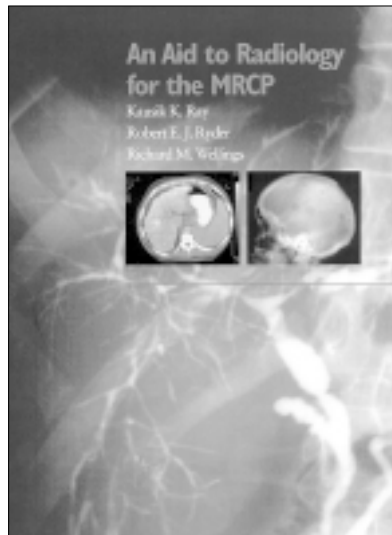


NEW TITLES



Blackwell Science Ltd UK: Oxford; 2000.
ISBN 063204912X

This book is aimed at those working for the MRCP examination and who wish to improve their chances of success with the questions involving diagnostic imaging. It begins with an introduction containing advice on an approach to image questions. It includes a brief description of the main imaging techniques and their applications, together with advice on what to look for in these various images.

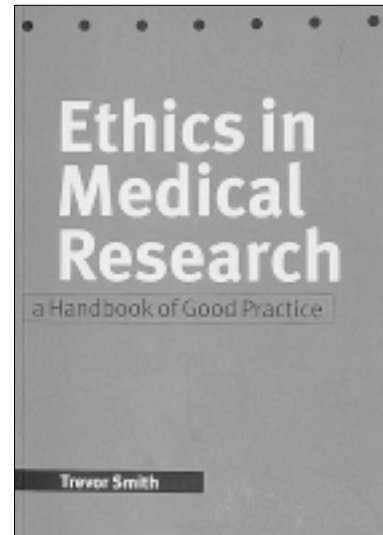
The first half of the book is made up of eight sections containing 119 questions relating to the diagnostic images. These cover Cardiology, Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, Haematology, Neurology, Renal Medicine, Respiratory Medicine and Musculoskeletal topics. The quality of the illustrations is generally satisfactory to good and the relevant abnormalities are visible to the reader.

The second half of the book repeats the images together with the answers to the questions from the first part. The answers include a short explanation of the findings on the images with appropriate annotation and often include further illustrative images.

A fairly wide range of conditions is covered in the book, but a book of this size cannot and does not try to cover the whole field. Instead, its value lies in teaching candidates how to approach questions containing images, examine the images in a sensible way and extract the most from them.

Priced at £22.50 this book will be of value to many MRCP candidates and will provide valuable training and insight into an area that is difficult for many at this stage in their medical careers.

PL Allan



Cambridge University Press: Cambridge; 1999.
ISBN 0521626196

This paperback volume is accurately described as a handbook. We are told little about the author, whose background is in biomedical research and service as an adviser and committee member in Tayside. The book is based on the Declaration of Helsinki of 1964 with subsequent amendments up to 1996. The Declaration is reprinted as an Appendix.

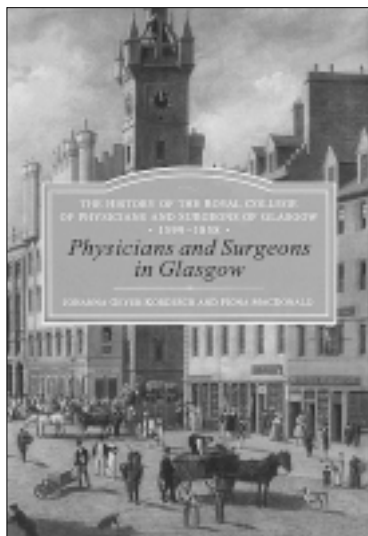
The structure and function of ethical committees are described in detail and much practical advice is offered. Discussion of the practical problems of ethics committees in relation to the functions of the chairman, need for expertise, place of nurses, doctors and lay members and difficulties posed by dominant personalities are all considered. It is made clear that members are representatives and not delegates.

The subsequent chapters discuss informed consent, risks and benefits, confidentiality, clinical trials, gene therapy, transplantation (including xeno-transplants), research and special problems concerning children and embryos. The relationship between national and local issues is considered and the problems arising when there is a lack of agreement between different committees confronted with the same problem. The search for internal consistency within a committee also causes concern. Questionnaires and epidemiological surveys are covered. The Appendices include specimen application forms, consent forms and a constitution for an ethical committee.

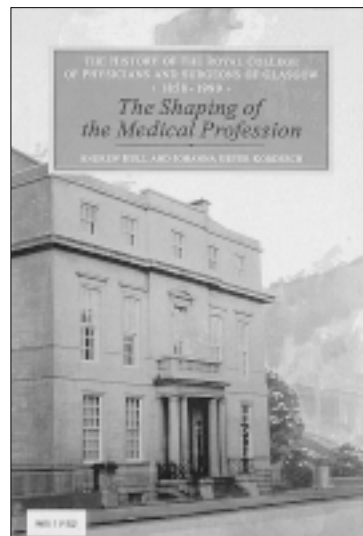
This book offers much sensible advice and comment as well as a comprehensive bibliography. It will be useful to researchers who are preparing applications and members of ethical committees.

B Ashworth

NEW TITLES



The Hambledon Press: London; 1999.
ISBN 1852851864



The Hambledon Press: London; 1999.
ISBN 1852851872

These two volumes provide an excellent history of the birth and development of the medical profession in the West of Scotland and the continuing efforts of its leaders to set and maintain high standards of care locally, nationally and internationally.

A unique feature of the Glasgow College has been its close links between physicians and surgeons from its origins in 1599. The first volume takes us through these early years, describing the tensions between the physicians and surgeons and between them and the apothecaries and barbers. There is also a fascinating account of the rivalry between Glasgow University and the Royal Faculty. This once erupted into expensive litigation threatening the very existence of the Faculty. Nonetheless, these initial difficulties were rapidly overcome and the two institutions have worked more or less in harmony from the 1800s until the present day. Indeed, the division of emphasis into undergraduate education (University) and postgraduate education (Royal College) has been a most satisfactory feature of Glasgow medicine for the past half-century.

The description of the Enlightenment as it pertains to medical matters (Volume 1) is a particularly fascinating one. It provides an interesting perspective on William Cullen, born in Hamilton, who became successively Professor of Medicine in Glasgow University and President of the Royal Faculty in 1747, before transferring to the Chair of Medicine in Edinburgh and subsequently becoming President of our College in 1773: a unique achievement which indicates the close relationships that pervaded the medical establishment in Scotland at the time.

Volume 1 ends with a fine account of the intense negotiations surrounding the run-up to the Medical Act of 1858, under the heading 'Time of Crisis'. This refers to the struggle to ensure that the Faculty maintained its position to influence this crucial piece of legislation and thereby remain a leading player in the regulation of the profession. The amity between the three Scottish Colleges at the time was reflected in the development of the Double qualification (with RCPedin) in 1859 and Triple in 1884.

Most of Volume 2 is devoted to the continuing struggles for survival of the Faculty/College against perceived or actual

threats from central government, the General Medical Council (GMC) or the universities. It is interesting to reflect that the current problems surrounding the GMC are by no means unique, but are rather the norm from the advent of the increasingly unwieldy organisation. The story is an exciting one of the gradual evolution of a financially viable organisation of international importance, which has a major role in the postgraduate education of UK physicians and surgeons on an equal basis with its ancient Royal Colleges in the UK and Ireland. There is also much evidence of collaboration with the newer speciality Royal Colleges in the development programmes of regular self-assessment for medical practitioners. The difficulties of ensuring that Fellows and Members regard the College as a major player on the postgraduate scene and not a collection of impressive buildings are given due emphasis. These comments will strike a chord with her sister Royal Colleges at this trying time in medical education in the UK.

All in all, the two volumes provide a fascinating insight into several aspects of the development and maintenance of a self-regulating profession. The volumes are well produced and of a convenient size for home bookshelves. They are well indexed and easy to consult. They have elegant dustcovers including a picture of 11 living former presidents.

These volumes can be recommended to scholars of medical history and to those who appreciate that a knowledge of the past can often provide a key to avoiding potential mistakes in the future.

DH Lawson