contents is exhaustive, there is the constant impression that something is wrong — I can only define it as a physician trying to handle surgical problems, with all the biases, prejudices and deficiencies that implies!

Should a surgeon buy this book? Probably not. Although the illustrations are unequalled, and the dermatological sections outstanding, the medical therapy for a number of conditions, even common conditions (e.g. inflammatory bowel disease) is idiosyncratic in the extreme. In addition, on the rare occasion that the role of surgery is conceded (e.g. for cancer), little more is said than that it might be a good idea. Indications, contraindications, complications, decision-making, to say nothing of operative detail, are all missing. There are also major gaps: incontinence is skimmed over, there is no section on postpartum, hysterectomy for piles is still supported, the discussion around chemotherapy for cancer ignores the large European studies and consensus, and so on. But as a general medical text (if it is possible to imagine this region falling within the ambit of a physician) there is nothing like it on the market.

G. J. Oettle


Laparoscopy in Children is a concise book on paediatric laparoscopic surgery. The operations are limited to general paediatric surgery, with a single chapter on thoracoscopic procedures. Specifically it does not address urological procedures except for impalpable testes. There are a number of controversial issues in the book such as emphasis on the use of the Veres needle (this is not practised by the majority of surgeons, as most have opted for the Hasson technique). Another is the detailed description of laparoscopic surgery for inguinal hernia, intussusception and anorectal malformations. These procedures have yet to be accepted by most surgeons, including this reviewer.

On the positive side, the book explains the common procedures such as Nissen's fundoplication, cholecystectomy, pyloromyotomy and appendectomy very well. There are ample illustrations for all the routine procedures. There is a section on trouble-shooting as commonly experienced by the laparoscopist.

The book is aimed at paediatric surgeons who have just started laparoscopic surgery.

It is an easy book to read; it took me only one night to read it completely. There are other similar books on the market but perhaps with fewer illustrations. It is a useful handbook for hospitals/universities with active paediatric laparoscopic units.

B. Banieghbal


This book is a crystallisation of current thought on the subject and the editor and his team must be commended on a task well done. Dr Klein has assembled a team of experts in their field who not only have the knowledge but have taken the time to review the literature over the last years, bringing the reader an up-to-date compendium of this vast subject. To put the subject into proper perspective, approximately 25% of all research papers at the last three annual American Urology Association meetings (10 000 delegates, 2 000 papers) were devoted to CaP in all its aspects.

Briefly, the book is divided into screening, localised and advanced disease, and molecular biology. Each chapter is very well referenced. In total there are several thousand references, with information well presented to the reader in a filtered manner, leaving out unnecessary and often confusing information.

As with all multiple-author publications (now standard practice) style and format differ across the various chapters. This is most obvious in the chapter entitled "The role of the medical oncologist" where the authors write a lot but say nothing that has not been said in other sections, and in truth contribute little to the value of the book.

The chapters by a lay survivor and his wife (two separate chapters) are of course a lesson to us all. They offer unique insight into how the informed patient thinks, and over time how one and his family gain knowledge of the disease. Of course the American patient is much more informed than his South African counterpart and what applies there does not necessarily apply here. I have always been a little ambivalent about "informed consent", a process whereby a doctor teaches a patient about a disease and then asks him to decide which form of treatment he chooses — knowledge that the practitioner might have gained over years and is now imparting to a lay patient in a short period of time — bearing in mind that the practitioner may be a urologist, radiotherapist or medical oncologist, each having his/her own bias. Altogether a very confusing picture if the truth be told. The patient and his spouse certainly conveyed the reality of this situation.

The various surgical techniques, including open and laparoscopic prostatectomy, are well discussed and sufficiently detailed to use as a reference on the subject. They are also very well illustrated, but what was interesting was that the hospital stay for laparoscopic prostatectomy was not detailed and I suspect will not better the short hospital stay for either retropubic or perineal prostatectomy (2-3 days).

The chapter on the bone pathology of CaP is particularly informative and detailed with clarification of both the effects of therapy on bone metabolism including osteoporosis and osteopenia as well as osteolytic and osteosclerotic secondary and the molecular biology of osteoblast and osteoclast interaction. The use of radiocaesium isotopes in therapy and that of bisphosphonates is very enlightening and clarified what had been confusing to me in the past.

The section on molecular biology covers a wide and intricate field and the clinician will have to read much to sort out what can be applied in clinical practice. But it is this field that has given us PSA and medical forms of therapy and much more that we as clinicians will not be capable of truly understanding, while realising its tremendous importance.

Much has been written on the difference of CaP in white and black Americans and we on the African continent should pay particular attention to this phenomenon. A reference to Nigerians and Jamaicans and their comparison may shed some light on genetic differences and dietary differences that may influence the higher incidence of the disease in African Americans and Nigerians (224 per 100 000 v. 304 per 100 000 respectively).

Alternative and chemopreventive therapies are well described in the literature and no publication would be complete without reference to this important aspect. We are now trained to ask all patients what homopathic or alternative medicines they take and are now defining what is useful and what is not. The lay press helps to keep the public well informed and the latter now has an array of potentially useful drugs including vitamin E, selenium, zinc, COX-2 inhibitors, vitamin C and lycopene among others with which to experiment.

The volume includes a free e-book in CD form, which interestingly can only be used once and not copied. It is of course useful in many ways and may be used as a quick reference on any aspect of the publication.

Altogether this book is a very valuable and useful addition to one's library and saves much time in sourcing information elsewhere. Because of its coverage of both diagnostic and basic science it will also be welcomed by the urologist-in-training looking to write qualifying examinations.

L. G. Gecelter