Book reviews

Issues in Research with Human Subjects. Symposium 20-21 March, 1978. Pp. 198. No price; single copies available on request from Publications Office, Fogarty International Center, National Institutes of Health, Building 16A, Room 205, Bethesda, MD 20205, USA. 1980.

Research in human subjects is very important. Apart from the study of disease there is now a widespread acceptance of the view that treatment can be shown to be effective only by controlled clinical trials. This brings physicians to give their patients dummy tablets, to deny them active treatment, and to fail to tell them what is going on. What patient would continue to take dummy tablets if he knew what they were? The surface of this important subject is gently stroked but not scratched in this little book, and it is probably good to remind clinical investigators of their moral obligations from time to time. Relations with regulatory authorities are also discussed, and the British investigator will be pleased to know, from an inside source, that the FDA will not reject his 'foreign data' just because they are 'foreign'. They may not be regarded as 'pivotal,' since it appears that 'foreign' investigators are reluctant to supply case records or report forms to support the honesty and integrity of their work. A continued deep suspicion of foreigners, and their work is clearly justified.

Jargon abounds in this publication. Could FDA, for example, give NDA, or could CSM grant NPL in NIH funded REC approved NHLBI CT of BO under HEW regulations using SSN for FECA at RBH? Words do not necessarily help. Once paper concludes that 'multi-centre clinical trials require a synthesis of the scientific method and the precepts of modern management.' Among a few very enjoyable and stimulating contributions is a paper on randomised controlled trials of non-pharmacological treatment. This would be enormously helpful to a young physician who wanted to do some research but could not think of a worthwhile project. Much of what physicians and surgeons do is empirical but could be randomised and documented. Though there is mention of heated discussion following a section on international harmonisation, this book is not particularly exciting, and one can only hope that the meeting from which it arose was better.

E. C. HUSKISSON

Diseases of the Knee Joint. 2nd edn. By I. S. Smillie. Pp. 508. £30.00. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1980.

Professor Smillie's monograph is an important addition to the already large number of books available on this subject. It is a major contribution to our understanding of this complicated structure and it represents a lifetime's experience; as such it cannot be neglected.

Although primarily intended for orthopaedic surgeons, the contents are of interest to all clinicians and students involved in the examination and treatment of musculo-skeletal disorders. Throughout the book he rightly stresses the importance of history taking in relation to the knee joint, and his description of the examination and investigation of the joint is masterly. The text is amply illustrated and the bibliography extensive, making the work extremely useful as a book of reference. The author sounds the right note of caution on the subject of joint replacement. Operative details are included in sufficient detail to complement the text, which is extremely lucid and readable throughout.

This is a comprehensive and authoritative work on the diseases of the knee joint. It is essential reading for orthopaedic surgeons and trainees and an important work of reference for allied specialists in the field.

A. J. HALL

A Colour Atlas of Clinical Orthopaedics. By Lipmann Kessel. Pp. 175. £22.00. Wolfe Medical Publications: London. 1980.

This beautifully illustrated atlas covers a wealth of clinical orthopaedics in a readily assimilable style. The text, though brief, is pithy and clearly set out in relation to the illustrations, which are all of the highest quality. The pathology illustrated is so florid that one is left in little doubt as to the nature of the disease being described.

Though by no means a complete pictorial survey of the subject, this book is nevertheless a very useful introduction to clinical orthopaedics. It should prove invaluable to medical students, physiotherapists, nurses, and their teachers.

A. J. HALL

Hoists and Their Use. By Christine Tarling. Pp. 318. £8.00. Heinemann: London. 1980.

This excellent book arises from the information obtained by the Hoist Project Advisory Panel set up by the Disabled Living Foundation. This opened its doors to the professions and lay public in 1970. A year later it had become obvious that the hoists caused more difficulties than any other kind of aid. Further, as the author notes, many nurses either had no access to hoists when lifting heavy patients, or disregarded them. Yet backache remains a frequent cause of absenteeism in nursing—and may drive more senior nurses into administration. Many other hospital staff remain at similar risk.

The aims of this book then are to gather together all the available information on hoists and to encourage training in their correct usage. It succeeds admirably. It is well set out and easy to handle, with information