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Book Review

Underwood JCE, editor: *General and Systematic Pathology, Third Edition, 833 pp, Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, 2000 (£37.95).*

Only 8 years have passed since this textbook first appeared in print, and yet here it is already in its third edition. Such an enthusiasm of commercial publishers cannot be explained any other way than that the demand has surpassed their expectations and that the sales have exceeded the limits of Great Britain. I did not have time to find out how widely this textbook is used worldwide, but a terse note in the preface indicates that it has been 'an internationally popular textbook.' I have no reason to doubt this, and anybody inclined to read the third edition will understand the reasons for such a success. So much for all those who maintain that medical bibles are printed only on this side of the ocean. My congratulations to professor Underwood and his collaborators.

Like the previous two editions, the current text covers comprehensively both the general and systematic pathology in a format suitable for teaching undergraduate medical students. The book has been updated constantly, and the new developments have been included, especially in the chapters dealing with general pathology. The chapters on systematic pathology have a more clinical orientation than before, reflecting the

intentions of the authors to make pathology more clinically relevant and less 'anatomical.' The authors also wish to make their text useful for the new problem-based curricula.

Despite the additions and some restructuring, the book has retained its old overall layout, and all the strong points of previous editions are still here. It is always a pleasure to read such a well-crafted and meticulously edited text and see how the masters of medical education use words and pictures to ensnarl medical students, and make even the most boring parts of pathology interesting.

It is hard to believe that an excellent text could be improved, but the third edition of Underwood shows that even that can be achieved if one is passionate enough and believes that the effort of revising the book is worth the while.

A book of this kind deserves a wide readership. Unfortunately, I do not believe that many US medical students will use it (for reasons that are too obvious). Still I hope that this little note of mine will at least generate some interest among the professors, especially those who appreciate inspirational teaching.

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