

PERCEPTION AND PERFORMANCE UNDERWATER.
J. A. Adolfson and T. E. Berghage.
Chichester: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
£10.85.

It is a pleasure to be able to review a book which has so many commendable features especially when it is a product of international co-operation: Dr Adolfson is associate Professor at the Research Institute of National Swedish Defence at Stockholm and Lieutenant Commander Berghage, MSC, USN, is Director of Allied Sciences of the US Navy's Experimental Diving Unit, Washington DC. Both are internationally respected psychologists in the field of undersea biomedical sciences and this book is a natural product of their collaboration while Dr Adolfson was working for a year as a guest scientist at the Naval Medical Research Institute, Bethesda.

Not only is this book the first to gather into one source most of the major studies relating to human perception underwater, thus becoming a useful review of this topic for the researcher but also, by relating the different factors of this unique environment to diver performance, it is a useful book which should be read by all medical practitioners who need to understand the diver and his tasks.

Following a lengthy introduction, the major sections cover vision, hearing and spatial orientation underwater. Communication in its several forms is given detailed attention in a section to itself. So too is human performance, but, if there must be any criticism, perhaps more space should have been devoted to this vital topic.

With the current, belated but nevertheless welcome, recognition in this country of the diver as an essential component of future national economy through the off-shore oil industry, a knowledge of the factors affecting mental and physical performance underwater has become important. Thus this book is to be recommended as relevant to all practitioners of maritime medicine. D.H.E.

POISONING BY DRUGS OR CHEMICALS. Peter Cooper, FPS, 3rd Edition. London: Alchemist Publications. £2.85.

This handbook has changed its format from previous editions. Double column printing has been introduced which makes the book much more readable. The inevitable increase in size has been justified on the basis of additional data. Though it will not quite go into my white coat pocket it should still fit into most Casualty Department bookshelves.

The text and a comprehensive index give

good access to rapid advice. Each poison is described briefly under various headings with no padding, and short 5-10 line potted histories allow it to be read for fun in one's spare time, with reward.

The small sections on simple qualitative aids to the identification of various poisons will be particularly helpful to doctors who have not got immediate access to professional chemical expertise. From these sections a useful box of diagnostic re-agents could be prepared for use in a Casualty Department.

Some omissions are inevitable and one of these is contact with, or ingestion of, radioactive substances. After all, the point of such a book is to allow one to deal with the completely unexpected within a few minutes. Perhaps it is for this reason that the more common forms of poisoning are not given much space for their more detailed management, such as the acid-base problems of aspirin overdosage in children, or the use of plasma expanders in barbiturate poisoning.

It is reassuring to know, however, that when paraesthesiae of the mouth and limbs follow your plate of 'Moules Marinières' inadvertently gathered in late spring, instead of your château bottled Graves to wash them down, you would fare better with a half bottle of Sodium Sulphate 10 per cent — I'm told it has a fine bouquet. P.D.C.

MEDICINE IN OLD AGE. (From the *British Medical Journal*.) Pp 178. London: BMA. £2.00.

This most valuable collection of papers, previously published in the BMJ, can be strongly recommended to MRCP and MRCGP students. No one can complain at a cost of £2 for 22 such articles. Amongst the series it is invidious to select other than on a basis of personal preference which is apt to do little more than delineate the previous gaps in one's own knowledge. Possibly for this reason the present reviewer gained most from the more general papers on Drug Therapy, Nonspecific presentation of illness and psychiatric disorders in old age. It can only be stressed that this is important practical and examination reading. P.J.P.

Correction

In the review of NORMAL ADOLESCENCE (Crosby Lockwood Staples Ltd) Vol 60 No 2, p 156, *JRNMS*, it was stated that no paperback version was available. A paperback is available at £1.50.