

Book Review

***Tropical medicine.* Kevin M Cahill and William O'Brien**

Ever since the demise of the tropical supplement to Davidson's *Principles and Practice of Medicine* there has been a need for a concise, yet adequate, and authoritative text on tropical medicine. Does this little book fulfil that need satisfactorily?

Certainly the book is the right size at 250 pages, neatly produced, clearly printed and easy to read. I like particularly the interesting, semi-historical introductions to many of the chapters, with their cameos, quotes and informal style of writing, although at times this leads to lack of precision.

Sections on the classical infectious and parasitic diseases of the tropics are supplemented by others on diarrhoeal disease, malnutrition, hereditary anaemias, tumours, snake bite, eye disease and heart disease. This provides a fair coverage but sections on drugs and immunization would greatly enhance the book and there are some idiosyncratic omissions such as fasciola hepatica from the flukes.

Unfortunately, the text is riddled with mistakes and inaccuracies, which range from the merely annoying to the dangerously misleading, and there are numerous 'infelicities of expression' as the late Dr S G Brown would have called them. The treatment sections recommend drugs for use but sometimes only give the trade name and hardly ever the dose, thus reducing the usefulness of the book. The majority of the 33 black and white plates are of such poor quality as to be valueless. The excellent list of references, which are in fact suggestions for further reading, does not compensate for the book's other inadequacies. Sadly, I doubt if this little book will fulfil the need.

Heinemann Medical Books, Jordan Hill, Oxford. 250 pp; £14.95.