



IN MEMORIAM

John Alistair Smith



John Alistair Smith passed away on 18 June after a protracted period of ill health. He was born on 7 September 1924 in Johannesburg. After schooling both in Natal and the UK, he joined the Royal Air Force as a navigator in night fighter Mosquitoes. He served from 1942 to 1946. Thereafter he studied at Oxford and Guy's Hospital where, after qualifying, he did his internship.

In 1953, he returned to South Africa and was appointed as a Registrar at Groote Schuur Hospital. In 1955 he commenced a private general practice which he built up to a 5-doctor group practice over the next 15 years. As a medical student in South East London and among the equally poor and disadvantaged in Cape Town, this brought realisation of the importance of comprehensive primary health care and the socio-economic factors that influence health. Hence in 1969 he was asked to help organise the newly founded day hospitals. These units gave some relief to the overcrowded general hospitals with service nearer to these needy patients. He introduced the highly successful obstetric units which, in turn, improved both maternal and child morbidity.

He was one of the founders of the South African College of General Practice, an offshoot of the main UK College who awarded him an honorary FRCGP. This local branch later became the Faculty of General Practice of the College of Medicine of South Africa.

In 1986 he became Medical Director of a publishing house and helped launch the South African edition of *Update* (of which he was editor until he fell ill 2 years ago), *Hospital Update* and the *British Medical Journal*.

In his personal life he was generous to a fault. The ideals which he espoused made him make medicine his vocation, ideals which he firmly held despite the sacrifices he knew he would have to make.

He leaves his wife Jean, a daughter Caroline, two sons Richard and Anthony and six grandchildren.

By us all he will be sorely missed.

Des Sonnenfeld

BOOK REVIEW

Handbook of Kidney and Kidney Related Diseases for Laypersons

By Babatunde Lawal Salako. Pp. 108. Illustrated. Sandavies Publishers. Nigeria. 2007. ISBN 978-062-052-2.

This little book sets out to explain in lay terms some of the 'mystery' of kidney diseases. It covers acute and chronic kidney disease in a simple manner. The author points out, and rightly stresses, the importance of prevention of chronic kidney disease (CKD). Sensible lifestyle and diet are mentioned as well as monitoring blood pressure and early diagnosis and treatment of CKD as well as diabetes mellitus. He briefly discusses the drugs that may be used in the treatment of these disorders and the importance of adherence to such drug regimens along with weight loss, exercise, and diet. He comments on the situation with regard to dialysis and transplantation in Nigeria, which is clearly even more under-funded and poorly supported than in South Africa. Transplantation is largely limited to living donor transplantation and the costs are high. Even such common and widely used drugs as ACE-inhibitors appear from his comments to be limited in availability because of cost.

The book is simply written for a lay readership, and is easy to understand despite some grammatical errors. Overall this book may be helpful to the lay public in understanding something of kidney disease but is clearly targeted at a Nigerian readership in terms of costs, and the availability of drugs and dialysis.

M D Pascoe