



either singly or combined versus placebo or versus no intervention were included in their analysis.

They found that when all low- and high-bias risk trials of antioxidant supplements were pooled together there was no significant effect on mortality. Multivariate meta-regression analyses showed that low-bias risk trials and selenium were significantly associated with mortality. In 47 low-bias trials with 180 938 participants, the antioxidant supplements significantly increased mortality. In low-bias risk trials, after exclusion of selenium trials, beta carotene, vitamin A, and vitamin E, singly or combined, significantly increased mortality. Vitamin C and selenium had no significant effect on mortality.

So, the conclusion was that treatment with beta carotene, vitamin A, and vitamin E may actually increase mortality. Not something that will be widely publicised by the supplement industry.

Bjelakovic G *et al.* *JAMA* 2007; 297: 842-857.

BOOK REVIEWS

Diversity and Division in Medicine. Health Care in South Africa from the 1800s.

By Anne Digby. Pp. 504. SFR 110. Peter Lang AG.2006. ISBN 3-03910-715-1.

This impressive work very aptly reflects that which its title conveys – diversity and division. It is not an example of the more conventional history of medicine by a historically minded (medical) doctor, but effectively a social history of health care by a professional historian.

The author is research professor in history at Oxford Brookes University. She has worked and taught in Britain, Japan and South Africa and has widely researched her subject in many libraries in these countries, where she has been in personal touch with numerous individuals and institutions.

The range of themes treated is notably broad: missionary medicine, 'Western' medicine, African indigenous medicine, medical training, nursing and nurses, patients, witchcraft, colonial framework, political background, and more. The text

is amply supplied with detailed footnotes guiding the serious reader to appropriate sources. Not surprisingly a most striking feature of the work is its extensive 'Sources and bibliography'. This comprises subsections ranging from manuscripts, official papers, journals, articles and chapters, books, unpublished theses and papers, websites, oral testimony to sources of material culture – the whole section occupying no less than 39 pages. A very adequate index completes the volume. The quality of all the illustrations (13) is rather disappointing.

This soft-cover book is one of a series designated Studies in the History of Medicine edited by Charles Webster of All Souls College, Oxford. It constitutes a thorough and comprehensive contribution to South African social history and is a worthy addition to the corpus of its medical history in particular.

E M Sandler

Case Studies in Medical Imaging. Radiology for Students and Trainees.

By AT Ahuja, GE Antonio, KT Wong and HY Yuen. Pp v + 488. R570 incl. (P&P). Cambridge University Press. 2006. ISBN 0-521-68294-0

This book provides a concise overview of a well-selected and broad range of bread-and-butter conditions encountered in everyday radiology practice. Index cases are presented with pertinent clinical information and key images, together with a model report on the imaging. It is possible to tackle these cases in an undemanding test-yourself format, or to merely read through the text. At the end of each system-based section, a mini-review offers pearls on the topic raised by each case, often with the welcome addition of the spectrum of appearances of the same condition, and differential diagnoses.

The book is contemporary with a sensible mix of film and cross-sectional imaging, and prepares the reader for cases likely to be encountered on call. It is rather like using a film library with an experienced consultant at your side. It manages to cover a lot of ground by using this format, and is a welcome addition to the learning material directed at registrars starting out in clinical radiology, as well as interested medical students.

Steve Beningfield