BOOKS RECEIVED

Prevent infection! Guidelines for clinicians, nurses and paramedical staff in general and psychiatric hospitals and nursing homes on how to prevent or combat infection

Translated and adapted by W. C. Noble from a booklet prepared by a committee of the Health Council of the Netherlands. 1983. William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd, London. Pp. 106. £3.75.

If the advice in this little softback were to be applied generally there would be less hospital infection around than there now is. And for a hospital worker who wants to make progress toward this result without much insight into the fundamentals of the subject, this book could be useful. However, such a person would be better served by a locally produced document that takes into account the special circumstances of the hospital. This should be prepared by a hospital-infection team whose members know a great deal more than this set of didactic instructions and who can call on fundamental knowledge to deal with special local needs and with unusually complex and sometimes baffling problems. There are no references here to direct them to sources of other information, but the booklet could at least serve as a check list to remind them of points worthy of consideration.

That this is largely a translation is apparent in that there are grammatical errors, even more inelegancies of expression, some words that are not part of everyday medical parlance in the English language, and a few recommendations that do not apply to hospital practice in Britain. One strange suggestion (page 77) is that urine-drainage bottles should contain "a small amount of undiluted formaldehyde"; but formaldehyde is a gas and the correct addition is the liquid *formalin*.

There are, as in any book, points on which a reviewer does not agree but these are a few and do not detract from the general excellence of the advice.

R. BLOWERS

How to write and publish a scientific paper

By ROBERT A. DAY. 1983. 2nd edition. ISI Press, Philadelphia, PA. Pp. xiii and 180. Soft cover, US\$14.95; hard cover, US\$20.95

Many of us received our primary education in scientific writing from one of the classical "house" style-manuals, such as G. H. F. Nuttall's (1940) "Notes on the preparation of papers for publication in *The Journal of Hygiene and Parasitology*" or G. S. Wilson's (1965) "Guidance for preparing the typescript of scientific papers", which are learned, compendious and rather grave. This book is altogether a more light-hearted affair. Robert Day was a distinguished editor and member of the Publications Board of the American Society for Microbiology; his detailed recommendations follow the practices of their journals but are confined to a series of appendices. The main body of the book is a general account of how to write well and to satisfy the requirements of the editors of any scientific journal. It provides guidance for the younger worker at all stages of the preparation of a paper, and gives advice on how to select an appropriate journal and deal as painlessly as possible with editors and printers. Special requirements for review articles, book reviews, and the oral presentation of papers are dealt with separately.

The first edition of the book was based on a course of lectures for postgraduate students in the Institute of Microbiology at Rutgers University. The present one keeps the original format but has been somewhat broadened in scope and revised to take into account modern typesetting methods and the use of electronic aids to scientific writing. Each chapter sets out a few

important principles and gives illustrations of their application—or of the dire consequences of their neglect—that are generally informative and often very funny. The book does not have a high content of detailed information, which can easily be obtained elsewhere, but is full of wisdom. It can be read straight through with pleasure and profit, and not only by the young and inexperienced. The quality of life of the Editors of this *Journal* would be strikingly improved if more aspiring authors were to read the excellent chapters on the preparation of tables and figures.

M. T. PARKER