This is not a pocket book but is one to which all infection-control officers and nurses should have access.

ROBERT BLOWERS

Introduction to sterilisation and disinfection

By JOAN F. GARDNER and MARGARET M. PEEL. 1986. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh. Pp. 183. £17.50.

The authors intend this book to cover the subjects of sterilisation and disinfection for medical, dental and science students, and to be used, also, as a textbook in specialised courses for microbiologists and for post-basic education and training of hospital staff. This is a very wide range. Books of this sort can be divided into those that provide a good knowledge of principles and background and those used for every-day reference to solve specific problems. This book belongs to the former category. After the initial chapter on basic microbiology

and terminology, eight chapters cover various methods and aspects of sterilisation and the next two disinfection, with only the final chapter dealing with applications of sterilisation and disinfection and hospital policies.

Over the last few years, sterilisation has become more the province of the engineer than the microbiologist, and books like this provide useful explanations to non-engineers at an understandable level. The book covers methods common in hospitals, wet and dry heat, and rare or absent in hospitals, gas sterilisation and ionising radiation, clearly and intelligently, in both principle and application. Disinfection, on the other hand, is more the province of the microbiologists, yet receives comparatively little attention in this book, certainly not enough for an everyday working knowledge of the subject.

The book is called an 'introduction' to the subjects and so it is, and its price makes it accessible to most who continue to take an interest in sterilisation and disinfection.

P. N. HOFFMAN

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