suits is an aid to swimming and that the advantage gained continues into the cycling stage as athletes do not have to spend the first few miles warming up. The pro-wet suit lobby counter that any advantage gained would be lost by a slow transition time between the swim and the cycle. However, the magnitude of the advantage conferred by wet suits may outweigh this.

The evidence from this trial has made the decision about what kind of wet suits to allow in Triathlon in Britain more difficult. Medical advice remains that wet suits should be permitted for health and safety reasons. However, a mean advantage of 7% is most significant in international competition. If wet suits are unrestricted they will become a standard item of equipment, the assistance being limited only by finance.

Regulations about the use of wet suits must be agreed internationally to ensure equal competition whilst promoting the health and safety aspects of the sport.

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BOOK REVIEW

Title: BAILLIÈRE'S HANDBOOK OF FIRST AID
Authors: Norman G. Kirby and Stephen J. Mather
Publishers: Baillière Tindall, London
Price: £6.95 **360 pages.** Index. Numerous line drawings **ISBN 0-7020-1097-9**

Because of the efficient and centralised Ambulance Service in Britain's National Health Service, most of our recent first aid books omit much of the detailed casualty management given in the times of the two World Wars, leaving the main advice to "Tie his legs together and dial 999". It is therefore a welcome change to read a book that does not assume that such help is always at hand, and that in certain circumstances more may have to be done, in mountains, at sea, or in a major disaster. All the basic first aid in such as the St. John Handbook is covered, but this book goes a long way beyond the basics. Part I is a general introduction to first aid principles, resuscitation, emergency childbirth, action at road traffic accidents and in major disaster situations. Part II is an elementary introduction to anatomy and physiology as applied to emergency treatment which is useful for the layman, but the overuse of phrases such as "... is called ..." or "... known as ..." tend to make the approach rather unsophisticated. These words are omitted in the section on the eye, which makes me think these pages were written more recently and not taken from earlier editions. The description of the 11th and 12th ribs, "to which only muscles are attached" ignores their vertebral articulation, and the illustration of the biceps as two completely separate muscles acting only as elbow flexors without any supination is also misleading.

Part III is on clinical practice, and generally is excellent, though a few minor additions could be made with advantage. Shock is well described, including myocardial infarction, but there can be silent MI's that do not give the usual severe pain. On wound closure steri-strips and butterfly strapping could be mentioned as being within the realm of the first aid worker; not every incised wound needs to be sutured by a doctor. The first sentence on tetanus infection implies that death is an inevitable result instead of a mortality of 20%, though the lesson of early and repeated immunisation is stressed. The traditional description of an open fracture, with bone ends protruding through the skin wound is given but there is no mention of the obvious "closed" fracture but with a whole-skin-thickness wound hidden elsewhere on the same segment of the limb as the fracture which needs treating surgically as an open fracture.

These minor points do not detract from a comprehensive book, in which one may pick out most useful sections on sports injuries (and we are pleased to note that the first named author was a member of our Association for several years) and his long Army experience is reflected in the section on war and urban terrorist injuries and nuclear disasters, so relevant with Ulster and Chernobyl in mind. The chapter on poisons is brought up to date, and includes industrial poisons, and the section on head injuries gives in detail the nationally accepted Glasgow Coma Scale, new to many of us no longer in hospital practice. New dressings are described, and developments in the design and use of stretchers (though not the Thomas' Mountain Rescue Stretcher). Techniques of splint application are given, including the Thomas' splint, so useful in leg fractures remote from ambulance road-head.

The book is highly recommended for those teaching advanced first aid, and I am sure that many doctors as well as nurses and physiotherapists could, like myself, learn a great deal from it.

H. E. Robson