

Self-Assessment Colour Review of Thoracic Imaging

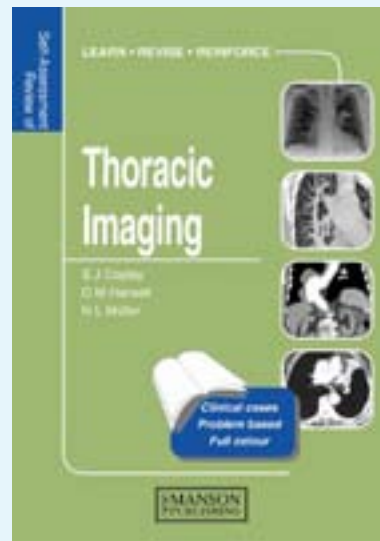
SJ Copley, DM Hansell, NL Muller
Manson Publishing Ltd 2005
Price £18.95. Pp 192
ISBN 1840760621

This A5 size book, written by three eminent radiologists, reviews 100 cases of thoracic pathology. It is a self-assessment book aimed at medical students, physicians and surgeons, as well as trainee radiologists, and retails at £18.95.

Each case is based around one or more images, which in the majority of the scenarios includes a chest X-ray. Other imaging modalities examined include computed tomography, ultrasound, nuclear medicine, angiography and magnetic resonance imaging. The cases are formatted such that the questions appear on the front and the answers on the back of each page; this way, it is hoped that no inadvertent peeking at

the answer occurs before the reader has given each case a thorough consideration.

One of the book's plus points is its size, not quite pocket-size, but small enough to put into most bags and carry around, and read at an opportune moment. However, 100 cases is rather a lot to fit into a small book. This means that the pictures are small, which is not really a problem for cross-sectional imaging, but makes interpretation of the chest X-rays with more subtle pathology a little tricky. Nonetheless, each case is comprehensively written, with a detailed clinical history, a descrip-



tion of the imaging findings and the underlying pathological explanation for the appearances, a concise description of the condition, and a differential diagnosis where appropriate.

I would certainly recommend it to radiologists in training, especially those like myself about to take the final FRCR (Fellowship of the Royal College of Radiologists) examination, as well as physicians specializing in thoracic medicine, or even those taking the MRCP (Membership of the Royal College of Physicians).

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Essential Neurology (4th edn)

Iain Wilkinson and Graham Lennox
Blackwell Publishing 2005
Price £22.95. Pp 278
ISBN 1 4051 1867 9

Medical students commonly think that neurology is the most difficult of the medical specialties. Many will go into a cold sweat when asked any sort of neuro-anatomical question and others tend to view the whole specialty as rather a black art. There is no doubt that neurology is a highly complex subject, and the number of diseases and knowledge of neurological function is increasing all the time. Medical students therefore need a textbook that will present only the basics and eschew the minutiae. In this respect this new edition of *Essential Neurology* succeeds admirably.

As the authors set out in their 'mission statement', they avoid unnecessary detail and provide a set of principles on which to base clinical practice. These are presented in a clear way and the use of simple diagrams adds much. The new edition of the book is greatly enhanced by the increased use of diagrams and neuroradiological images. A new feature is the inclusion of case histories at the end of each chapter which stimulate thought and promote further reading. Perhaps

future editions will see an increase in the number of these case histories, as they undoubtedly enhance the individual chapters.

All in all, *Essential Neurology* is to be recommended to the medical student seeking a basic textbook of neurology. The authors have a wealth of clinical knowledge and have taught scores of medical students. This experience shines through the book and time is given to common medical student pitfalls. Students who understand the principles set out in the book will have a sound basic knowledge of neurology.

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Hypertension in the Elderly

Edited by L Michael Prisant
Humana Press 2005
Price \$121.50. Pp 531
ISBN 1 58829 197 9

Hypertension in the elderly is an important topic. Nearly all of us who reach the age of 70 years are likely to benefit from blood pressure lowering. Yet experience tells us that it is not that easy. In reality the older you get the bigger the risk, but the less well blood pressure is controlled. Tell me why, tell me what I need to look for,

and to know, to make a decision to treat; is some blood pressure reduction better than none: is there really a benefit in an eighth tablet?

This book struggles to directly answer these questions. Concise essays by experts in their field cover most key areas from an epidemiological and pathological perspective. Notable exceptions include 'diastolic' heart failure. However, at over 500 pages of monochrome type this book does not leap off the table. You will find specific and clear information, perhaps with some repetition; you will not find concise summaries of what to do – so the section on secondary hypertension tells me all about hyperaldosteronism, but does not tell me how to deal with uncontrolled hypertension in an 82-year-old patient.

This is a reference book which should be read in concise sections. It contains much information, but it is unsure of itself. As a visual reference book it would have benefitted from a larger format, better use of colour and space, assistance with navigation and summarization. In its current format this is a worthwhile departmental 'shelf' book for clinicians of all grades.

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