

Recent Advances in Paediatrics 21

Edited by Timothy David

RSM Press 2003

Price £35.00. Pp230

ISBN 1853155721

This is the latest edition of the well-respected 'Recent Advances in Paediatrics' series. It is aimed at junior doctors preparing for postgraduate exams, e.g. MRCPCH, and paediatricians of all specialities trying to keep abreast of the latest research.

The book is divided into fourteen topics covering diseases, management and theory of the common (asthma and diabetes) to the commonly considered (Kawasaki's and muscular dystrophy). The book ends with a list of the most significant papers in paediatrics from 2002, arranged by speciality – ideal for picking out key research for presentations

and orientating your reading before exams.

The chapters are readable, even after a full day's work. They are written in an engaging style which answers relevant dilemmas; the topics are covered in depth without getting bogged down by unnecessary detail. Each chapter ends with a box highlighting the most relevant points for clinical practice. Paediatrics is advancing rapidly and the chapter on depression has been written before the recent revelations about suicide risk and paediatric antidepressants, however, the vast majority of this chapter is still highly relevant.

Overall this book gives an superbly readable summary of the current thinking on 14 key topics in paediatrics; if you want to sound streetwise about cannabis or be able to expound the potential benefits of dirt this is the book for you.

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Oxford Handbook of Dialysis (2nd Ed)

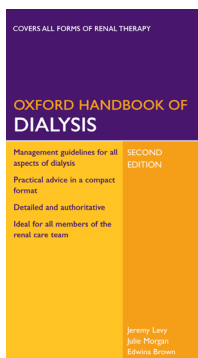
Jeremy Levy, Julie Morgan, Edwina Brown.

Oxford University Press 2004

Price £24.95.

Pp 903

ISBN 0198529546



Set out like others in its series, this Oxford handbook covers most aspects of the multi-disciplinary care needed for the renal patient. It logically works through presentation and complications of renal disease, moving on to haemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis with their associated complications. The interactions between palliative care and renal medicine are touched on in one of the latter chapters, with the useful addition of the renal association standards, K/DOQI guidelines and European best practice guidelines listed for reference at the back.

The book is easy to read, with tables to ease understanding. Key trials in dialysis are covered and the chapter on drug prescribing in the dialysis patient is particularly useful for the junior and middle-grade renal doctors.

It touches on most aspects of the renal patient's care, with great practical detail on nursing issues and nutritional requirements and assessment. Though such detail is of value, this book does beg the question of who the designed

readership is. This book would be a useful addition to any renal unit but is unlikely to be bought for individual use.

This book is a good overview of the multidisciplinary approach needed for renal patients and a good reference text for national and international guidelines and trial data, but its intended audience is unclear.

Dr Helen Campbell

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The Endothelin System in Cardiopulmonary Disease

Edited by Martine Clozel and Lewis J Rubin

Friedrich Reinhardt Verlag 2004

Pp 263

ISBN:3724513364

Endothelin-1 remains one of the most powerful vasoconstrictors discovered and, overproduction of this peptide following endothelial cell dysfunction, contributes to pathophysiological processes, making this system a particularly attractive drug target. The discovery of peptide receptor antagonists with good oral bioavailability is considered particularly challenging but, remarkably, FDA approval for the first drug in this class, bosentan (Traclear), was achieved within 12 years of the discovery of the peptide.

This book arose from a meeting in June 2003 summarizing the recent advances in understanding of the

pathophysiology of endothelin and the clinical applications of bosentan – a mixed ETA/ETB antagonist. The book highlights the success of bosentan since the first clinical trials were completed in 2001, as the first oral treatment for pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH). Initial studies of 3–7 months' duration reported improvements in patients with idiopathic PAH in exercise capacity, haemodynamics and delayed clinical worsening. Importantly, the survival of WHO Class III patients treated with bosentan after 3 years was at least as good as intravenous epoprostenol. The median predicted survival for these patients is under 3 years but, with bosentan treatment, 3-year survival was nearly 90%. Subsequent chapters consider evidence for efficacy in other clinical indications including connective tissue disease, particularly systemic sclerosis (included as a subset in the original trials) and associated digital ulcers, HIV-associated PAH and, more speculatively, in liver disease including portal hypertension. Bosentan represents a significant new therapeutic strategy: this book will appeal to both scientists and clinical investigators interested in discovering new applications for endothelin antagonists and unravelling the contribution of endothelin system to disease.

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