

Oxford Handbook for The Foundation Programme

Stephan Sanders, James Dawson, Shreelata Datta, Simon Eccles
Oxford University Press 2005
Price £19.95. Pp 550
ISBN 0 19 856789 8

This book claims to be ‘the most useful book you can carry for the critical first two years after medical school.’

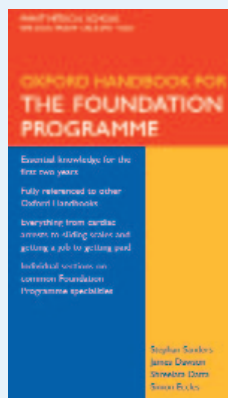
The first third is devoted to the practicalities of day-to-day work and survival in your first job, and is well written and helpful. There is also an excellent section – new to the Oxford Handbook series – on being organized and the expectations that your team will have of you during the day, as well as during on calls.

Another section deals with career progression and bravely attempts to explain the new career structure that modernising medical careers has created. I say brave, as the regulatory authorities really have not

yet finalized the career path – a problem openly acknowledged in the book’s text.

The remainder of the book covers clinical problems with a final section on techniques and procedures. This is where the book struggles a little as it is trying to cover all specialities. I looked at the sections relevant to haematology and asked a colleague in ophthalmology to do the same.

Haematology is covered throughout the book. Two pages attempt to cover the main haematological malignancies and sickle cell trait, which is very optimistic, but transfusion of blood products and coagulation issues are well covered. This is probably a fair balance as new doctors will never be expected to diagnose lymphoma but will need to manage warfarin and heparin regularly. The ophthalmology section has good coverage



of the basics of ophthalmological examination and an excellent glossary of terms used.

Both sections contain some factual inaccuracies but if you follow the advice given in the book and always discuss with senior members of your team and check the BNF and consequently should avoid these errors.

This is a good little book. The opening section is full of helpful advice and I would advise any new doctor to read this or a book with similar advice. The rest of the book will help with most problems. It is unlikely to be all you need for a specialist attachment, but it will help you ask the right questions of a senior colleague. I suspect that this book will become the ‘comforter’ carried

by the next generation of doctors.
James Bailey, St James’s University Hospital, Leeds

Really Essential Medical Immunology (2nd edn)

Ivan Roitt, Peter J Delves, Arthur Rabson
Blackwell Publishing 2004
Price £19.95. Pp 224
ISBN 1405121157

Immunology has seen tremendous advances in the last few years and newer books are important to keep in touch with these. The second edition of *Really Essential Medical Immunology* provides a good introduction to immunology and the mechanisms involved. It presents the fundamental concepts of immunology and takes the reader logically through the basics of immunology, antigen recognition, the acquired immune response, the control mechanisms and discussing the immunity in infections, immunodeficiencies, allergies and auto-immune disorders.

The book discusses the basic concepts, the current perceptions in immune mechanisms and the molecular basis of the immune phenomenon but the section on clinical immunology is very brief and does not provide sufficient information on diagnosis and management of various immunological problems. Aspects of clinical immunology, in my opinion, deserve more comprehensive coverage.

Certain historical aspects of immunology are discussed which makes good read-

ing. This book is very well illustrated with lots of tables and colour diagrams. One of the most salient aspects of this book is the revision section provided at the end of each chapter. This gives the reader a quick reference and easy access to all the important and interesting material in the chapter.

Immunology is generally considered a challenging topic and this book would help students as an undergraduate teaching tool and clinicians with an interest in immunology as a refresher.

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Basic Medical Sciences for the MRCP Part 1 (3rd edn)

Phillipa J Easterbrook
Churchill Livingstone 2005
Price £25.99. Pp 448
ISBN 0 443 07326 0

The basic medical sciences section of the MRCP can be a nightmare. Designed to test knowledge of anatomy, immunology and the like, it usually involves dredging knowledge out of the hazy memories of 1st and 2nd year medical school. This book consolidates those 2 years into just eight chapters. It covers all the knowledge needed for Part 1s and is also useful for those studying for MRCPC or PLAB exams.

The anatomy and physiology chapters are particularly good – very easy to read

with just the right amount of detail and lots of diagrams that easily commit information to memory.

The microbiology chapter is extremely detailed, which can be off-putting, but it’s easy to flick through to read in smaller bursts if you’re short of time. All the latest information with regards to rapidly changing topics is included.

Pharmacology is thoroughly covered, and the chapter includes useful reference tables of the most commonly used drugs with particular respect to drug interactions and adverse effects.

The statistics section gives easy-to-understand explanations of the common (and less common) statistical methods, with plenty of examples to make more difficult concepts easier to grasp.

If you are the sort of person who likes thorough explanations and lots of detail, this is the book for you. Yet it is also useful for last minute revision as the chapters are well indexed and clearly laid out.

My only criticism of this book is that there is a large amount of information contained in too small a space, with little room for adding your own notes. I would prefer to see a thicker book with less cramped text and more blank spaces, but I would still buy this one.

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