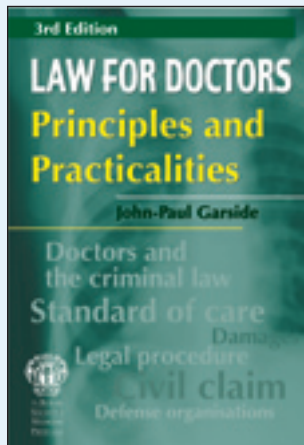


Law for Doctors: Principles and Practicalities (3rd edn)

John Paul Garside
RSM Press 2006

Price £14.95. Pp 112
ISBN 1 85315 681 7

This is the third edition of a book which aims to be a source of law easily accessible to medical practitioners. The book begins with a helpful guide to interpreting the abbreviations used in legal text as well as a clear explanation of the structure of the English legal system and the sources of English law. The cases on which English law is based are



included throughout the text as references, and a brief summary of each case is provided at the end of each chapter. Although this makes reading a little disjointed, including descriptions of the cases in this way helps to illustrate the points of law and makes the subject more interesting.

Chapters on negligence, confidentiality, complaints and consent will help doctors to understand the law as it applies to medicine, and will be a useful source of information for those who may experience, for example, a claim or a coroner's inquest.

Although very concise, the amount of information is adequate to meet the aims of the book, and useful lists of further reading are included in each chapter. However, as a practical guide the book is very general, and doctors may find that they still need to take advice on individual cases.

This is an easy-to-read guide to the common areas of law with which doctors come into contact, and it can be used either as background reading to a legal topic or as a quick reference resource. This book will also be a helpful revision aid for those doctors who undergo a further qualification in medical law.

*Marika Davies, Medicolegal Adviser,
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Oxford Handbook of Clinical Anaesthesia (2nd edn)

Edited by Keith G Allman and
Iain H Wilson

Oxford University Press 2006
Price £29.95. Pp 1203
ISBN 0198566090

This is a truly remarkable handbook in the practice of anaesthesia. The second edition is even more user-friendly than the first. A new colour layout plus the new chapter index on the back cover makes finding information remarkably easy.

The book has 43 chapters and is neatly divided into eight sections. The first section deals with preoperative considerations for common medical conditions and their implications in anaesthesia. Rare and uncommon syndromes are covered in a separate chapter. Section two gives practical advice on various surgical subspecialties, written by anaesthetists who are experts in their areas.

Personally, I find the chapters well-structured with relevant facts in bullet-point form, making it easy for a quick reference during those precious spare moments in theatre, or on the wards. Other sections cover acute pain, obstetric anaesthesia, paediatric anaesthesia, and anaesthetic emergencies. The latter is dealt with more comprehensively than its predecessor with new chapters on paediatric emergencies.

Resuscitation guidelines are up-to-date. Practical procedures are covered in addition to a few new chapters such as

oesophageal Doppler monitoring, depth of anaesthesia monitoring and long-term venous access. The section on regional anaesthetic techniques is by no means exhaustive, and in my opinion, could do with a few more diagrams on relevant anatomy.

Finally, like the first edition, a handy formulary and infusion regimens for drugs commonly used in anaesthesia are included. It is not meant to be a substitute for the British National Formulary, but as a quick reference for doses, a few cautionary note, and significant side-effects. For this purpose, it does the job pretty well.

All in all this handbook excels in its convenient size, comprehensive information in a rapid-access format. It is especially well-suited for the trainee anaesthetist, but the senior anaesthetist will also find the information useful. If there is one book I carry with me to work daily, it is this one.

Lick Tan, Selly Oak Hospital, Birmingham

Communication For Doctors

Edited by David Woods
Radcliffe Medical Press 2004
Price £21.95. Pp 125
ISBN 1857758951

'How to improve patient care and minimize legal risks' is the tag line for this book and it gives you a feel of what it is trying to achieve.

The book comprises five sections: 'patients are a virtue', 'watch your lan-

guage', 'physician heal thyself', 'managing your practice' and 'minimizing risk'. Each section is made up of contributions from the thirteen authors. Importantly only a few of these are practicing doctors. Lawyers, professional communicators and patient groups make up the rest.

The first section deals with direct patient communication; although it makes some good points, most of the ideas are taught in medical school. The second section looks at the art of language, both spoken and written. It is the most interesting section of the book and not just for the practice of medicine. The health-care experience of an American editor is enlightening as is the comment on the future of medical publishing.

The third section focuses on the doctors and gives tips for speaking, studying and consultation skills. This section was a little patronising to the practising doctor as doctors must be at least satisfactory at these skills to qualify. The fourth and fifth sections look at practice management and managing risk. They give some useful ideas on both counts, but tend to be aimed at the American audience.

The book is easy to read and small enough to read cover to cover in a few hours. All the ideas could not be implemented in the real world because of time pressures, but it is an interesting coffee-time read for the experienced GP and hospital doctor.

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