

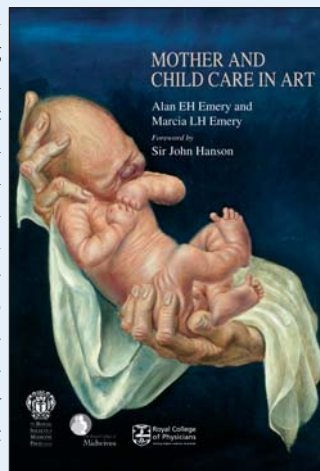
Mother and Child Care in Art

Alan and Marcia Emery
RSM Press 2006
Price £45.00. Pp 140
ISBN 1 85315 629 9

Art and medicine remain close, so close sometimes as to be conjoined. Medical practice as an art form and the doctor as an artist are twinned themes of this exceptional book. The sheer joy of their task and the examples of the chosen works by the Emerys shines from so many pages.

The time span reflects the human condition through the ages. First recorded

procedures and medical advances are the well-spring of their ideas combined with social and economic reflections of the origin and prevalence of diseases, old and new. They have been fair but selective, critical but inclusive and enlightening in their desire to reaffirm the close relationship between what medicine can achieve and how the artist will perceive that progress.



The husband and wife team have justifiably drawn an engaging and distracting journey through medical history. They import selected and relevant canvases to educate, inform and stimulate the reader. Any doctor who enjoys art will love this collection. It would make a good gift at any time of the year.

Roy Farquharson, Liverpool Women's Hospital, Liverpool

Practical Ultrasound: An illustrated guide

Jane Alty, Edward Hoey
RSM Press 2006
Price £34.95. Pp 242
ISBN 1 85315 603 5

Practical Ultrasound is an excellent book primarily aimed at radiology and sonographer trainees but also anyone contemplating undertaking general ultrasound.

It is tailored to assist the learner in mastering the technical aspects of the ultrasound machine, acquiring and interpreting the images. Ultrasound is immensely operator dependent and mastering the skills is not easy, especially for a novice and requires years of practice. I certainly think it fills a gap in the market, covering the practical aspects of performing ultrasound, which in the hands of an accomplished operator may seem effortless.

The book deals in a step-by-step approach with the undertaking of common scans in a general ultrasound department. The chapters are organized according to anatomy.

The book illustrates the various positions to place the probe combined with ultrasound images and accompanying line diagrams. It has a very user-friendly layout with concise bulleted practical guide to performing ultrasound scan and features to look for along with plenty of images. It does not pretend to be a bench book on the finer points of ultrasound pathological findings, which are covered by countless other books.

The book is to be recommended and although intended for the trainees, it may be just as useful to experienced staff, as a quick reference in areas outside their nor-

mal field of interest. The minor shortcoming is that it does not cover specialist areas such as musculoskeletal, cranial and interventional ultrasound.

Shah Khan, Blackburn Royal Infirmary, Blackburn

The New Politics of the NHS. From creation to reinvention (5th edn)

Rudolf Klein
Radcliffe 2006
Price £24.95. Pp 279
ISBN 1 84619 066 5

Rumour has it that John Reid, when told by Prime Minister Tony Blair of the then latest cabinet reshuffle, exclaimed, 'Oh, f***, not health!' At every twist and turn of NHS policy, Rudolf Klein is one of those called upon by the *BMJ* to write an editorial. Any politician who reads his book would certainly put a post in the Department of Health firmly on the not-to-do list.

The Politics of the NHS first appeared in 1983; by the third edition in 1995 it was *The New Politics of the NHS*. This fifth edition adds two chapters and 50 pages to the seven chapters of the story up to 2000. Just a little over half way through, Klein writes of the setting up of Thatcher's 1989 review *Working for patients*. For various reasons, there was a meandering start. The most important reason was 'that there is no magic formula for health care reform and that any attempt to devise one inevitably turns into a conflict between competing claims and interest.' So why do the politicians carry on doing it? Regional health authorities beget area health authorities which include district health authorities which become primary care trusts which

subsume primary care groups – or is it the other way around? A year or two later there are mergers 'to cut down on bureaucracy and save money', except that they save less than anyone thought, or even cost more.

In 1948, a few months before the NHS was set up, chairmen of the regional health boards complained that the Ministry of Health was interfering in the hospital medical committees' business, and so it has continued. Politicians constantly declare that the everyday decisions must be made locally, but to enable these decisions more power is taken back to the centre. Recent clashes about herceptin are nothing new; it is just a recent example of how to reconcile 'an absolutist ethic of treatment and a utilitarian approach to resource use'.

Two things are certain. First, the NHS was doomed by its own success. As a minister of health wrote in 1958, if one is now less likely to die of diphtheria as a child, one has a greater chance of succumbing later to coronary disease or cancer. Second, to quote Klein's last chapter, 'The world into which the NHS was born no longer exists'. Restructuring, however, goes on for ever, because what else can ministers do?

Amazon suggests that you buy this book with its 'perfect partner', Chris Ham's *Health Policy in Britain*, also in its fifth edition. Alternatively, you could download all Klein's and Ham's editorials from the *BMJ*. Either way, you will have no more idea of how to organize the NHS than anyone else, but you will know what's been tried.

Neville Goodman, Southmead Hospital, Bristol

Ham C (2004) *Health Policy in Britain: the politics and organisation of the NHS*. 5th edn. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke