

Handbook for Surgical Cross-Cover

Isobel Fitzgerald O'Connor,
Michael Urdang
Oxford University Press 2008
Price £24.95. Pp 610
ISBN 978 0 19 929648 4

Handbook for Surgical Cross-Cover is the latest title from the world renowned Oxford Handbook series. They seem to offer titles on any aspect of medicine and I must admit I have only ever used the handbooks for clinical medicine and emergency medicine. However, this book, although in need of minor refinement, will be indispensable to surgical trainees. It is aimed at the junior doctor on call and offers information and guidance on the management of common surgical problems.

The book contains fourteen concise chapters covering the breadth of surgical specialties including maxillofacial and

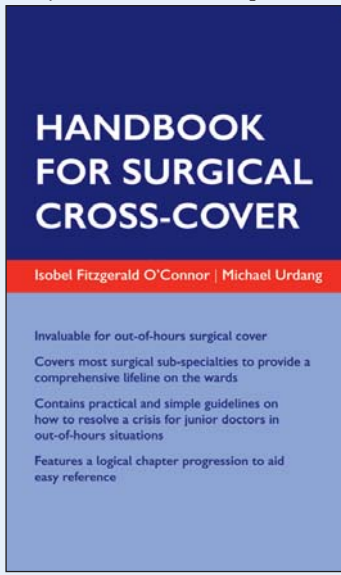
paediatric surgery. The chapters are structured well into an introduction to the specialty followed by common conditions seen in the emergency department and those seen on the wards. Many of the introductions are excellent, namely neurosurgery, orthopaedics, vascular, ophthalmology and maxillofacial, offering anatomical diagrams, physiology, examination techniques and a synopsis of common operations.

Most conditions are covered over one or two pages and give an idea of seriousness followed by questions to ask on history taking, signs to look for on examination and a management plan. The radiological images and pictures are not

of good quality – the ophthalmology chapter contains colour plates and use of these in other chapters would markedly improve the functionality of this book.

Despite this the book will be invaluable to the modern day surgical trainee who is likely to be covering specialties in which he/she has no prior experience. It will also enable the trainee to offer a more respectable verbal or written referral to seniors. It is definitely joining my trusted anatomy text and *Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine* in my on-call handbag.

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Cystic Fibrosis (3rd edn)

Edited by Margaret Hodson, Duncan Geddes, Andrew Bush
Hodder Arnold 2007
Price £99.00. Pp 503
ISBN 978 0340 907580

The third edition of *Cystic Fibrosis* is a welcome addition to reference texts on cystic fibrosis. The third edition is substantially different from the second edition. The editors have chosen to separate the chapters into discrete sections covering the history and epidemiology of cystic fibrosis, basic science, diagnosis, clinical aspects and multidisciplinary care. These sections have been considerably expanded and updated and very well referenced.

The respiratory section has been expanded and split into infections and non-infectious complications, rather than the adult/paediatric split of the second edition. The upper airway, often neglected, now has its own chapter. Welcome additions to the content include sleep and lung mechanics, and delivery of therapies to the cystic fibrosis lung.

New sections include monitoring (including the use of databases to improve care) and the future of cystic fibrosis. The monitoring section is particularly valuable given the focus on quality improvement in cystic fibrosis. Also valuable for the prac-

ticing cystic fibrosis health-care professional and researcher is the chapter on outcome measures in clinical trials.

The only criticism is that some of the illustrations are too small, and have had to be duplicated as plates in the middle of the book.

Overall, however, this is an excellent book – well written, easy to read, and with an exhaustive reference list at the end of each chapter. It should appeal both to the student wishing to learn about cystic fibrosis (although it will have more detail than they need), and to the cystic fibrosis professional wishing to delve into an area in more detail, for whom it will serve as an excellent reference text.

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Opioids in Cancer Pain

Edited by Karen Forbes
Oxford University Press 2007
Price £5.99. Pp 154
ISBN 978 0 19921880

This is a small, cheap multiauthor book in a neat format, similar to other books of the same series. The format suggests that this book is aimed at students, nurse practitioners and young doctors. The authors try to summarize in the limited space the whole science of pain and opioids. The space is so limited that some difficult con-

cepts mentioned are not explained fully, such as splicing, upregulation, dimerization, desensitisation and apoptosis. This makes the book less understandable for the target group.

As an experienced doctor I learned several things I was not aware of but in general the book does not contain much new information – in contrast to apparently very recent references. The authors avoid controversial issues like opioid-induced hyperalgesia, contribution of myofascial pain, differences in clinical effects of opioids and intractable pain. Breakthrough pain is not featured in a separate section but is scattered through many chapters.

On the more positive side, the authors discuss the value of combinations of different opioids which is quite a new concept often avoided by predecessors. The authors mention CYP2D6 slow metabolizers but fail to mention the much more dangerous but rare state of fast metabolizers. Fentanyl lozenges have now been available for long enough to be assessed for their clinical value.

In general I found the book almost complete and the statements well supported by the listed evidence. I only struggle with the feeling that I do not know to whom this book should be directed.

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