

The Yearbook of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (Volume 12)

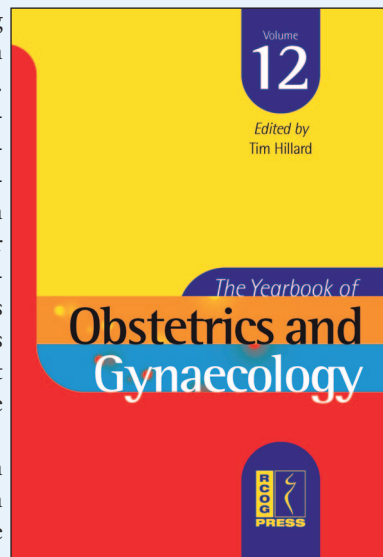
Edited by Tim Hillard
RCOG Press 2007
Price £48.00. Pp 340
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This is the 12th, and last, in the series originally envisaged as bringing together topics and lectures presented at the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in the previous year to disseminate to a wider audience. The editor asks the reader to take a few moments to reflect on the wonderfully varied nature of our speciality and, having read the book from cover to cover, I have rediscovered how absorbing a career in obstetrics and gynaecology can be.

The lectures presented and transcribed initially appear wordy compared to the concise fact-driven books and papers we now read day to day but relax when read-

ing rather than reading to learn and the wisdom within is inspiring. There are straightforward educational chapters on prenatal ultrasound and chapters on advances which may or may not enter long-term practice such as Stephen Kennedy's review of management of endometriosis. Some seem too brief.

The contributions on screening for ovarian cancer and hormone replacement therapy are a useful step back from often dogmatic opinions and the concepts developed are crystallized to perfection by Paul Hilton's review on surgical effec-



tiveness for stress urinary incontinence. Hayden Homer's contribution on the basic science of the ageing egg is beautifully crafted and almost worth the asking price alone.

The chapters appear to have been edited in no particular order but rather than jumping in at random start from the beginning, as I did, and by the time your journey down the river has finished you will certainly be a wiser and, I

expect, better doctor for reading this book.

Peter C Reid, Luton and Dunstable NHS Foundation Trust

Palliative Care Formulary (3rd edn)

Editors in Chief Robert Twycross, Andrew Wilcock
Palliatedrugs.com 2007
Price £40.00. Pp 613
ISBN 978 0 9552547 10

Much expanded from the earlier volume, the third edition of the *Palliative Care Formulary* now incorporates several new chapters covering opioid dose conversion ratios, management of postoperative pain in opioid-dependent patients, analgesic drugs and fitness to drive, spinal analgesia and oral nutritional supplements.

The main sections of the book are well structured with drugs listed by class under body systems (such as cardiovascular, gastrointestinal system and respiratory). The information for each drug is clearly set out under headings of indications, pharmacology, cautions, undesirable effects, dose and use and the evidence supporting the drugs' efficacy is well referenced yet succinct. Tables and figures are frequently used to clearly convey important drug information. Furthermore, where relevant the references have been revised and updated since the previous version of the book in 2002.

There are several additional appendices with helpful information and the appendix with compatibility charts for syringe driver drug combinations is an excellent

resource which is complemented by a separate chapter that covers the basic principles and practicalities of continuous subcutaneous infusions as a method for drug delivery.

The information obtainable from this book far exceeds that available in general pharmacological texts such as the *British National Formulary* and also incorporates key information that would be found in other more specific palliative care pharmacology texts relating to the use of syringe drivers.

A well-presented comprehensive and invaluable resource which should appeal to doctors, nurses and pharmacists with a generalist or specialist interest in palliative care prescribing.

Dylan Harris, University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff

Oxford Specialist Handbooks in Cardiology: Heart Failure

Roy S Gardner, Theresa A McDonagh, Nicola L Walker
Oxford University Press 2007
Price £34.95. Pp 543
ISBN 978 0 19 920573 8

On my bookshelves, and no doubt yours, are various books, large and small, that I have been given, purchased or even asked to review. Many may only have been opened once, some a few more times. But a dog-eared few earn a place on one's desk

among the daily clutter. For me such regulars include the *Oxford Handbook of Acute Medicine* and *Pocket Essentials of Clinical Medicine*. They share a functionality suited to frequent use, with durable plastic covers, and a pocket size suitable for easy access (in a white coat – if you are still allowed one!).

Joining them will be *Heart Failure*, a new addition to the Oxford Specialist Handbooks in Cardiology. Clearly illustrated, this book covers both theory and practice, with sections on acute heart failure, chronic heart failure, co-morbidity, the evidence base, heart failure services and palliative care.

There is information on everything from the assessment and management of acute heart failure to the work-up for transplantation; from the insertion of a central line to the use of a balloon pump; from cyclooxygenase-2 inhibitors to the key trials, from when to refer for valve replacement to Lyme disease and myocarditis.

This useable book is ideal for anyone, at all clinical levels, with an interest in heart failure who needs a practical textbook with clear, concise information. It is worth having merely to dip in to for information. My only regret – I wish I had written it.

Hugh F McIntyre, The Conquest Hospital, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex