

Ischemic Heart Disease

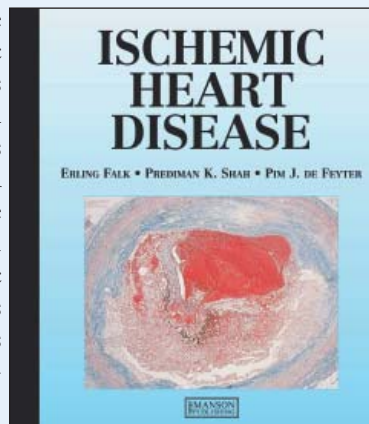
Erling Flak, Prediman K Shah, Pim J de Feyter
 Manson Publishing 2007
 Price £85.00. Pp 312
 ISBN 9781840760521

The three renowned authors of this book set themselves a daunting task: to produce a concise guide to the management of ischaemic heart disease. To achieve this they enlisted the help of more than 100 international collaborators and produced an easy-to-read, well-presented and succinct thesis.

The book consists of 23 short chapters which tackle the subject in a logical fashion, setting off with an insightful introduction into the epidemiology and pathophysiology of the disease. This is followed by a critical overview of the different invasive and non-invasive investigative modalities, new and old.

Every aspect of the treatment of both chronic and acute syndromes is subsequently discussed but this is biased towards the acute syndromes. A particularly informative chapter examines 'special problems' in ischaemic heart disease and deals with special subgroups such as patients with diabetes and renal disease. Future treatment strategies such as stem cell therapy and the genetics of ischaemic heart disease are also discussed. All of the chapters are referenced, lavishly illustrated and use numerous tables to summarize important points.

The book has only a few shortcomings. Despite its international contributors some chapters are targeted more to a



north American than an international audience. On occasion there is a discrepancy between the clinical importance of a subject and the discussion it received in the book. The most striking example is the brevity of the chapters on primary and secondary prevention. A chapter on cardiovascular therapeutics would also be a welcome

addition.

Overall the book achieves its primary aim and practitioners in the field would benefit from the comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge that this colour handbook imparts so effectively.

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Essays in Medical Biography

JT Hughes
 Rimes House 2007
 Price £20.00. Pp 204
 ISBN 978 1 874317 01 2

Why do we so enjoy reading about the lives of our medical forebears? Well, first we enjoy a good story and, doctors being realists, a true story is of particular interest. What was it like to practice medicine before decent opiates, let alone anaesthetics or antibiotics, were available? (When I was a medical student we only had sulphonamides!) Second, there is so much to learn about the foundations of our craft from the originators of our current concepts of disease and therapy.

Dr John Hughes, a retired Oxford neuropathologist, is well known as an author of deeply researched essays in medical biography. In this book he has collected together 18 of his previously published papers, the majority in medical historical journals. Seventeen of these range over well, and less well, known physicians and surgeons in this country from the 17th to the 20th century. Four essays concern Dr Thomas Browne of Norwich, his family, his early life and his writings. He is known particularly as the author of *Religio Medici*, a philosophical work much admired by Sir William Osler. Another three essays concern the little-known Dr Henry Power, of Halifax, another 17th century physician,

who experimented with barometers and whose vivisection studies supported William Harvey's concept of the circulation of blood. Power was ahead of his time in not using venesection, blistering and powerful emetics, the cornerstones of medical practice in those days.

There are three essays on Thomas Willis, a father of neuroanatomy and neurology. Among the other papers are two concerning Hugh Cairns, who was my Professor of Surgery in Oxford. As a young neurosurgeon Cairns treated Lawrence of Arabia, who suffered a lethal head injury after a motorcycle crash; this led Cairns to develop the crash helmet that saved many lives of dispatch riders in World War II.

This book is nicely written and fully illustrated; many of the pictures I have never seen before. It will appeal to any reader with a taste for medical history and biography.

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How to Succeed as a Leader

Edited by Ruth Chambers, Kay Mohanna, Peter Spurgeon, David Wall
 Radcliffe Press 2007
 Price £19.95. Pp 128
 ISBN 9781846191602

This book is relevant to hospital doctors, particularly those already in senior positions. Medical and clinical directors will

find it useful. However, there is no reason why new consultants, doctors in training or those in the staff and associate specialist grades cannot adopt some of the techniques proposed. Leaders can emerge from all levels of an organization and act in unique ways. Contrary to popular belief, we are not looking for another Luther King, Gandhi, Mandela or Thatcher. Ordinary people can achieve the required characteristics and behaviour.

This book has got some good content. It is well-structured and easy to read. There are useful sections in each chapter, such as top tips, frequently-asked questions and interactive exercises to try scenarios out in practice. The text is obviously based on the authors' extensive experience as well as theory and literature. Many of the authors are well-known in this field of management, yet are practising clinicians.

However, the book looks deceptively longer than it actually is. There are some large, rather idiosyncratic, cartoons filling whole pages. There are blank pages at the ends of many of the chapters. This makes it simple to skip through and to feel that you have read great chunks of it. However, it leaves a sense of being suboptimal value for money. Overall I would recommend this book to hospital doctors at all stages of their careers.

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