

Practical Patient Safety

John Reynard, John Reynolds, Peter Stevenson

Oxford University Press 2009

Price £29.95. Pp 300

ISBN 978 0 19 923993 1

A urological surgeon, a pharmacologist and a commercial airline pilot have joined forces to produce a chilling anthology of horrors and to throw down a compelling challenge to all professional health-care staff to redesign error-prone working practice and to turn their institutions into 'high reliability organisations'.

The case is made by a scholarly review of the 'science' of safety, travelling into the psychology of human behaviour and the inevitability of error. The excursion is liberally seasoned with harrowing exami-

nations of disasters in planes, trains, oil rigs, nuclear power plants and, of course, hospitals and clinics, along with guidance on how they can be minimized or prevented. The style and pace makes for a riveting read and could even engage reactionary consultants who resist checklists and standard procedures muttering things like 'I've treated thousands of patients my way and never had a problem'. A few senior airline pilots apparently still held similar views about flying 30–40 years ago, but not any more.

Aimed primarily at hospital doctors, the publication is timely as the European Working Time Directive increases hand-



over frequency and reduces clinical experience for trainees. Readers of this book will be able to recognize consequent 'red flags' and 'latent system failures' with the increased opportunity for 'loss of situational awareness' and 'mind lock' in out of hours emergencies. Others may not.

The authors' last paragraph says: 'Be brave. The fact that you have bought this book means you are in the vanguard of change'. Those bringing up the rear, who have not bought it, should borrow a copy from their more enlightened colleagues.

John Lilleyman, Emeritus Professor of Paediatric Oncology and Past Medical Director, National Patient Safety Agency

Paediatric Exercise Science and Medicine (2nd edn)

Edited by Neil Armstrong and Willem van Mechelen

Oxford University Press 2009

Price £49.95. Pp 650

ISBN 978 0 19 923248 2

This book provides a comprehensive evidenced-based guide to all matters relating to the paediatric exercising population; from those whose health would be improved by increased physical activity to elite athletes and everyone in between. There is a strong focus on how paediatric physiology differs from adult exercisers and this theme is emphasized in relation to fitness testing, training and injury.

There are five main parts which cover assessment in paediatric exercise science; developmental aspects in paediatric exercise science; physical activity, physical fitness and health; chronic health conditions and physical activity; and the elite young athlete. The detailed contents section makes navigation straightforward and each chapter is individually referenced. Authors are all leaders in their field and facts stemming from good quality research are clearly distinguished from expert opinion.

Those who frequently manage paediatric sporting injuries will find the chapters dealing with injury assessment and management brief and will likely be familiar with their messages. However, the key differences in injury profiles compared to adults are clearly explained and for those

who may be advising on physical activity promotion, but who are not used to managing injuries, these chapters will provide an appropriate introduction.

In achieving its aim of being a 'state of the art' reference work it is inevitably a wordy tome and not a light introduction to the subject. However, for all those whose work involves paediatric exercisers it is great to have all key topics located in one reference guide. It will be particularly useful for those requiring a recent review of the evidence base from which to base the updating of clinical practice or further research.

Eleanor Tillett, UCL Hospitals, London

Asthma and COPD: Basic Mechanisms and Clinical Management (2nd edn)

Edited by Peter J Barnes, Jeffrey M Drazen, Stephen I Rennard, Neil C Thompson

Academic Press 2008

Price £75.00. Pp 878

ISBN 978 0 12 374001 4

As the title suggests, this ambitious book attempts to compare asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphasizing both the similarities and key differences between these two diseases. By recruiting the most respected contributors, this book successfully delivers an excellent, up-to-date, comprehensive review of current understanding of these two conditions. Chapter by chapter, we are taken through their epidemiology, physiology

and pathology. The mechanisms and key mediators of airway inflammation are clearly presented. Diagnostic issues are then discussed, before therapeutic options and management strategies are outlined. While the basic science included in this book will interest and engage immunologists, cell biologists and scientists currently involved in respiratory research, there is plenty to interest and stimulate clinical respiratory physicians looking to improve the care they provide to patients.

The book is well structured and well presented. As each topic is considered, the fundamental differences between asthma and COPD are explicitly outlined. Where these two disease states are similar, this is also discussed in detail, providing insight into each condition. The primary literature has been carefully and extensively reviewed, the significance is explained and possible future directions discussed. The illustrations are clear, well presented and of an extremely high quality and serve only to improve the reader's understanding. Although a number of different authors contribute, to enable world leaders in each field to provide their expertise, the style has been maintained through out the whole text book.

This second edition of *Asthma and COPD* improves on the first, bringing us the most recent research in the field from basic science to clinical care. It is well presented, easy to read and highly informative.

Alison JM Whittaker, St Woolos Hospital, Newport