

Chamberlain's Symptoms and Signs in Clinical Medicine (13th edn)

Edited by Andrew R Houghton, David Gray
Hodder 2010

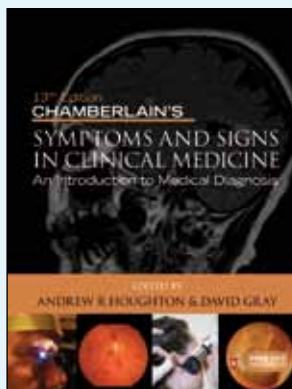
Price £29.99. Pp 491
ISBN 978 0 340 97425 4

This text is a system-based approach to the presentation, examination and investigation of disease. It alludes to the art and the science of clinical practice, but also special situations, such as the old, the young and the dying. I particularly like the variety and quality of pictures and diagrams, innumerable references and the use of text boxes containing 'important,' 'clinical pearl' and 'small print' information.

The book is clearly aimed at the clinical medical student or young doctor, with

the inclusion of the General Medical Council's good practice points, excerpts from the foundation curriculum but also the Royal College of Physician's standards of record keeping, all of which are a great resource. However, there are some oversights; for example the absence of musculoskeletal examination, at times too much basic science and insufficient clinical examination and some misleading comments, such as the significance of a patient being breathless only at rest.

There are some excellent points made throughout the text, including 'there are no routine investigations in paediatric medicine', something I would extend to



adult medicine and 'why is this particular patient, presenting in this particular way at this particular time' which is true of all presentations. I learned quite a few new facts, including that spring increases the risk of completed suicide, the House-Brackman scale of facial nerve function and the common co-existence of dementia and depression

in the elderly.

This is a well-written book, containing much for undergraduate and postgraduate examinations, and is a worthy alternative to other texts such as *Macleod's Clinical Examination*.

David Warriner, Sheffield University, Sheffield

Drugs in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care (4th edn)

Susan Smith, Edward Scarth, Martin Sasada

Oxford University Press 2011
Price £27.95. Pp 390
ISBN 978 0 19 959938 7

The fourth edition of *Drugs in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care* recently hit our shelves. At first glance it appears to be a slimmed down version of its former self. I first became acquainted with earlier editions back in Australia, when colleagues returning to Sydney from anaesthetic fellowships in the UK often produced it in theatre to refresh their knowledge and quiz their seniors.

As a bestseller pocket reference, this comprehensive A-Z formulary retains its rugged jacket, suitable for use in a busy clinical work environment, and its compact size fits the pocket of one's scrubs. Each drug is treated to a formulaic approach to its pharmacodynamics, pharmacokinetics and therapeutics, which works well as a format for both quick reference and for structuring exam-style answers during those long nights on call.

The text is small but the simple and effective editorial design ensures that it is still easy to read. The content appears appropri-



ate, with major drugs and drug classes covered and while there might be some absences of drugs from one's personal list, the authors have developed a comprehensive text. Welcome additions to the book include sugammadex and osteltamivir, while the appearance of trichlorethylene seemed a little strange.

The book appears to have changed little over the last few years and one is tempted to say: it is what it is. Personally I think what it is,

and what it will remain, is a useful functional text and a 'must-have' for the FRCA student for some years to come.

Navkiran Kaur, University College London Hospitals, London

Oxford Specialist Handbooks: Colorectal Surgery

Edited by Graham J MacKay, Helen R Dorrance, Richard G Molloy, Patrick J O'Dwyer

Oxford University Press 2010
Price £44.95. Pp 602
ISBN 978 0 19 957177 2

This book is the first edition of the popular Oxford University Press Specialist handbook range covering colorectal surgery. Its primary audience is the general

surgical trainee preparing for the FRCS examination, particularly those who wish to specialize in colorectal surgery.

The book has an easy to read informal style and uses a combination of helpful direct bullet points with simplified tables that are useful aide mémoires or indeed references. The line diagrams are clear and there is judicious use of appropriate radiology.

The book is divided into twelve chapters. The first three cover basic science, assessment and outpatient assessment. Chapters then cover specific conditions (inflammatory bowel disease, benign and malignant conditions), emergency presentations and common operations. There are also practical, helpful chapters on perioperative care and stomas.

The final chapter is devoted to related specialties which emphasizes that this book, although specifically designed for surgical trainees like other books in this series, will be also of value to medical students and specialist nurses and many others who practice in related fields of medicine. Nevertheless, the authors are to be congratulated on distilling out the topics, specifically designed to address the new curriculum designed by the Association of Coloproctology of Great Britain and Ireland.

Michael J Hershman, Stafford Hospital, Stafford