

## Palliative Care Formulary (4th edn)

Editors in Chief Robert Twycross, Andrew Wilcock

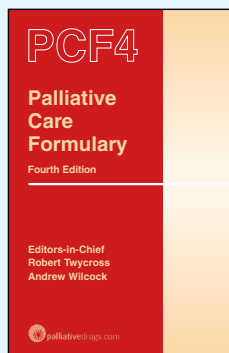
palliativedrugs.com 2011

Price £49.99. Pp 800

ISBN 978 0 9552547 5 8

Ever wondered how atropine eye drops can be used sublingually to treat sialorrhoea? Or how to distinguish between drug-induced movement disorders? If so, then the latest Palliative Care Formulary may be the book for you.

The formulary targets doctors, nurses and pharmacists involved in delivering palliative or hospice care. While not losing a cancer focus, the Palliative Care Formulary demonstrates the broadening scope of palliative care with sections on other life-limiting



diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic heart failure and renal failure.

Part one details individual drug monographs, in a similar format to the British National Formulary, but with additional information such as unlicensed use and detailed pharmacology. Part two and the appendices deal with themes specific to prescribing in the palliative setting such as continuous subcutaneous infusions and anticipatory drug planning.

At nearly 800 pages it is not designed for bedtime reading but as a valuable reference text for palliative care units.

Pharmacokinetic aficionados will love the chapter dedicated to cytochrome p450 but the level of detail will not be for everyone. In contrast the quick practice guide section provide 13 useful treatment summaries.

Like the British National Formulary, the Palliative Care Formulary will be most commonly used as an authoritative therapeutic reference – answering pharmacological queries that arise in clinical practice. As with each previous edition the depth of evidence and availability of medication has grown. Twycross and Wilcock deserve highest commendation for the rigor which they have brought to the production of the Palliative Care Formulary and their familiarity with the literature on which the formulary is based.

This new edition of the Palliative Care Formulary can be recommended as the definitive text for use wherever medications for palliative purposes are regularly prescribed.

*Stephen Ward, Northern Ireland Hospice and Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast/Max Watson, University of Ulster Northern Ireland Hospice*

## Cardiology Essentials in Clinical Practice

Gabriel A Adelman

Springer-Verlag Press 2011

Price £162.00. Pp 365

ISBN 978 1 84996 304 6

This is a textbook of cardiology in the old and trusted style. It has attempted to cover really the whole of cardiology, including for example congenital heart disease in one 23-page chapter. This is a difficult remit to achieve. The chapters are clear and the extensive summary tables not only break up the text but enable even more information to be crammed in. I particularly liked the summary table indicating the risk classification and management for cardiac complications in pregnancy – an area, along with aortic catastrophes, that can strike terror into many a doctor.

Those looking for detail in their niche areas will, by necessity, have to look elsewhere. My only criticism might be the selective use of references. If we take for example the chapter on cardiomyopathies; it might have been useful to direct the reader to review articles on restrictive cardiomyopathies, amyloidosis or hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.

At a price of £162, it is an expensive book. It is an intelligent and clear attempt to encompass a huge amount of informa-

tion. It certainly seems an attractive first line reference book to have in one's office, before striking out for more detail from the internet.

*Simon Dubrey, Hillingdon Hospital, Uxbridge, Middlesex*

## Oxford Handbook for the Foundation Programme (3rd edn)

Tim Raine, Katherine McGinn, James Dawson, Stephan Saunders, Simon Eccles  
Oxford University Press 2011

Price £29.99. Pp 680

ISBN 978 0 19 960648 1

In reviewing any Oxford handbook, comparison with the iconic *Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine* is inevitable. The *Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine* is the 'bible' – ubiquitous and indispensable. Its 600-odd pages are a miracle of condensation that earns it a place in the lexicon of doctors at all stages in their careers, from final year students to consultants. The only thing it seems to lack is a moment to breathe.

The *Oxford Handbook for the Foundation Programme* has one key feature: practicality. It is neither a last minute read before finals, nor does it contain a chapter entirely dedicated to rare eponymous syndromes. Instead it takes the basic and perhaps obvious. Tips for booking theatre lists on your first day to gems of knowl-

edge in dealing with common tasks (from constipation to intravenous fluids) which baffle nearly all foundation year 1 doctors, even those who can list the eponyms.

Its chapters on the medical specialities, excel, in a format centred upon different presentations rather than pathologies, and thereby renders accessible, even to a junior, the universal satisfaction of identifying, understanding and treating.

Occasionally there is repetition and over-explanation, with a disparity between the quality of chapters. 'Pharmacopeia' is essential for a junior doctor in any field while 'history and examination' takes almost 40 pages to elicit a history only a final year medical student would attempt.

If the *Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine* is medicine's bible then this handbook aims to be an apostle (and friend) to junior doctors – clarifying the abstract and giving them the confidence to practice medicine for the first time.

For just under £30, it makes light reading in the calm after finals. Upon starting the busy life of a foundation year 1 doctor most of the pertinent lessons from this book will probably be learnt on the shop floor, potentially leaving this useful handbook sitting on the ward shelf as a mere spectator.

*Tamer Rezk, University College Hospital, London*