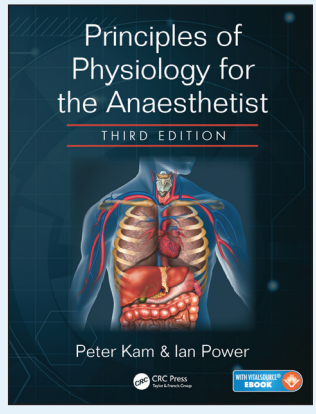
Principles of Physiology for the Anaesthetist (3rd edn)

Peter Kam, Ian Power
CRC Press 2015
Price £49.99. Pp 500
ISBN 978 1 4441 3523 7

Let me start with a confession – the original *Principles of Physiology for Anaesthetists* was one of the first textbooks I bought in preparation for the primary FRCA exam over 10 years ago. Sadly, it has largely remained on my bookshelf since then and instead I've relied upon the immediacy of books such as Yentis' *A to Z of Anaesthesia* for looking up facts and online resources for detailed explanations. However, that was my mistake.



The third edition of this textbook is not only a first class physiology reference book, covering much of what is needed by a wide range of postgraduate physiology exams, but it also offers the reader a chance to 'dip in' and double check facts. This is aided by clear and concise diagrams and a 'reflections' section that provides a comprehensive summary of each chapter.

So while this book is targeted at anaesthetists it will prove invaluable to any clinician faced with the challenge of postgraduate physiology exams. It is unlikely to sit on the shelves for long!

Jeremy Windsor, Chesterfield Royal Hospital, Chesterfield

Textbook of Palliative Medicine and Supportive Care (2nd edn)

Edited by Eduardo Bruera, Irene Higginson, Charles F von Gunten, Tatsuya Morita
CRC Press 2015
Price £180.00. Pp 1356
ISBN 9781444135251

This book covers the whole spectrum of palliative care. There is a strong emphasis on theory and evidence but less on the art of palliative care, that wealth of knowledge used to manage the challenging situations clinicians face. For example the emergencies described are the traditional clinical scenarios regarded as emergencies in the speciality but not the nuance of life for a family caring for a dying relative at home when every change is a potential emergency.

There is a strong emphasis on malignant conditions with multiple chapters on oncology treatments and cancer complications. However, there is far less coverage on non-malignant conditions or important palliative care issues such as communication, bereavement and needs of caregivers which get only one chapter each.

This text covers international comparisons and service provision, but would it appeal to clinicians in all parts of the world? It is important that we learn from each other or try to understand the different contexts but even as a UK clinician I struggled to put a useful context to some of the US-based chapters.

There are times when a more practical approach would be helpful, such as how to effectively agree and implement ceilings of treatment in non-cancer conditions or which regimen to use to initiate methadone therapy.

Having said this, the thoroughness of the text has to be admired. There are excellent chapters on less obvious, but essential, topics such as suicide, dignity and hope. There is inclusion of the needs and effective functioning of interdisciplinary teams.

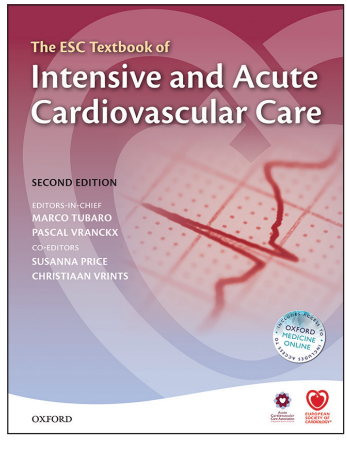
So would I spend £180 on this? This is a comprehensive text with easy access to an e-book. It is an excellent starting point for students of palliative care which makes an important contribution to any library.

Andrew Thorns, Pilgrims Hospice, Margate, Kent

The ESC Textbook of Intensive and Acute Cardiovascular Care (2nd edn)

Edited by Marco Tubaro, Pascal Vranckx, Susanna Price, Christiaan Vrints
Oxford University Press 2015
Price £195.00. Pp 800
ISBN 978 0 19 968703 9

Many clinicians, and possibly some cardiologists, will not have appreciated that cardiology has created the sub-speciality of 'acute cardiac care' to join the existing intervention, electrophysiology, imaging with heart failure and academic routes in training. Acute cardiac care involves the management of patients who will be predominantly on an intensive care unit.



The European Society of Cardiology's textbook of 'Intensive and Acute Cardiovascular Care' is a large reference book of some 760 pages, specific to the speciality of acute cardiac care. This book covers 'the whole gamut' from the planning of an ideal unit (including architects' floor plans), through training and accreditation and then tackles the majority of expected clinical conditions. It is an extremely broad reference manual for training and accreditation with sections on ethics, governance, safety, databases and registries.

The text is presented in a welcoming way and despite the enormity of the subject is not cluttered with detail. The book has a good quantity of high quality images, explanatory figures and summarizing tables that all help to break up the chapters into very manageable chunks. Within the text are indicators of access to a website from which the quoted references are downloadable and many images that can be acquired to PowerPoint.

Importantly, the 'procedures' sections within several of the chapters are clear, easy to follow and are also well illustrated – an essential component for conditions that will inevitably require invasive interventions. As a non-specialized cardiologist I have to say I would also find it a useful source of reference. It would appear to be an essential item for anyone entering this specialized field of acute care. Coming with the title of 'The ESC Textbook of …' it carries an authoritative weight that will not disappoint the reader.

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