

Handbook of Critical and Intensive Care Medicine (3rd edn)

Joseph Varon
Springer 2016
Price £42.99. Pp 470
ISBN 978 3 319 31603 1

The *Handbook of Critical and Intensive Care Medicine* returns in its third edition with the inclusion of new material and extensive chapter updates. Intended for 'practitioners engaged in critical care medicine across the world', its up-to-date and concise summaries relating to much of the pathophysiology and treatment principles encompassed by intensive care medicine provide a valuable read for those working in this field. The author rightly states in the foreword that this book is meant to serve as a general guide to current clinical practice in critical care medicine.

The twenty chapters, broken down into numerous sub-chapters (including a 'useful facts and formulas' section), are generally apportioned by organ

system. They also include special topics such as 'Toxicology' and 'Critical care of the pregnant patient', as well as helpful reference chapters including 'Pharmacological agents commonly used in the ICU', and 'Common laboratory values in ICU'. The latter of these usefully provides measurements in both American and SI units. While the volume of data encompassed in the book is commendable, one shortcoming is its crowded layout, which makes the text difficult to digest.

The *Handbook of Critical and Intensive Care Medicine* is not a book that one could easily read from cover to cover; however, it does deliver what it sets out to achieve, 'a concise yet comprehensive guide to critical care medicine'. It would be a useful reference text for all those involved in critical care medicine.

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Introducing Palliative Care (5th edn)

Edited by Robert Twycross,
Andrew Wilcock
palliativedrugs.com 2016
Price £25.00. Pp 400
ISBN 978 0 992 84672 5

The fifth edition of *Introducing Palliative Care* updates the seminal and revered Twycross and Wilcock text, designed to act as an adjuvant to the new *Palliative Care Formulary Five* (PCF 5). It is a more concise and lighter version of the latter text, represents an excellent first point of call when further clarification is needed and is good value for money.

The layout follows a logical path from an introduction to the ethos of palliative care, ethics, communication, spiritual aspects through to good pain management and a system-based approach to symptom control. It also provides a brief introduction to special aspects pertaining to paediatric palliative care before ending with a concise guide to the essential palliative care formulary.

The text is plainly presented but easy to read and is accessible to both medical and nursing staff working in palliative care. It

would be of benefit to other professionals supporting palliative care patients as well.

It works as a good introduction for new palliative care trainees, as a reference guide during real time reviews, and as a base text for more senior trainees to help prepare for the Speciality Certificate Examination.

Paul Ashwood, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Leeds

Oxford Desk Reference: Acute Medicine

Edited by Richard Leach, Kevin Moore and Derek Bell
Oxford University Press 2016
Price £60.00. Pp 816
ISBN 978 0 19 956597 9

Acute medicine is now firmly part of the urgent care landscape. There are several reference books aimed specifically at acute medicine, but this is probably the most comprehensive and authoritative with contributions from acknowledged UK experts in each field.

In 22 chapters it covers the breadth of situations and conditions that might present to a clinician working in acute medicine. The opening chapter discusses in a practical and engaging fashion the assessment of the

acutely unwell adult; the second chapter covers fluid management and nutrition. The third chapter acknowledges the importance of reinforcing lifestyle modification during episodes of acute care. The remainder of the chapters cover acute and emergency presentations by specialty.

The chapter about geriatrics has been relegated to 20, despite the demographics of the average medical take. One topic is glaring in its absence: the role of ambulatory emergency care and the processes around it, despite the success of ambulatory care units in many hospitals. There is relatively little on the organization and governance of acute medical units.

The content is up to date and in line with current guidelines although there are several mentions of determination of central venous pressure as part of fluid management, which is unavailable in most acute medical units and has a limited evidence base.

This book is useful for core medical trainees considering a career in a specialty with acute care commitments, for registrars with job planned activity in acute or general medicine.

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