

### Handbook of Clinical Skills (2nd edn)

**Edited by Peter Kopelman and Jane Dacre**  
**CRC Press 2019**  
**Price £24.99. Pp 408**  
**ISBN 9780815366911**

This is the second edition of this handbook, the first edition having appeared in 2002. The editors are physicians and prominent medical educators, and they are supported by a team of contributors in other specialist fields.

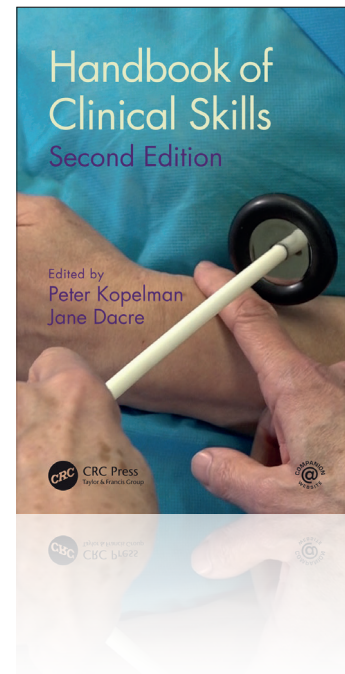
The handbook keeps with the times: it shows how to document physical examination on electronic patient records and it is accompanied by a series of videos that can be watched on the publisher's website. There are abundant well-drawn diagrams and high quality colour photographs.

Chapter 1 summarizes the history taking and routine examination, as well as briefly covering the process of differential

diagnosis. Chapters 2–10 cover specific organ systems and their more detailed assessment and treatment in all aspects (history, examination, diagnostics, therapeutics). Chapter 11 covers the general practice consultation. Chapter 12 covers the psychiatric patient and chapter 13 the assessment of children.

The intended audience of the work is those at the early stage of training, and I do think it succeeds at this, being well-structured and comprehensive. What it lacks is an apparatus of references. Specifically, there is no reference to the Rational Clinical Examination series from *JAMA*, which provide an evidence base for particular aspects of the clinical assessment. Some of the therapeutics content would also benefit from references to the most recent clinical practice guidelines.

*Jacob F de Wolff, Northwick Park Hospital, Middlesex*



### Asthma: Clinician's Desk Reference

**J Graham Douglas, Kurtis S Elward**  
**CRC Press 2019**  
**Price £59.99. Pp 342**  
**ISBN 9781138113466**

This concise book is aimed at clinicians and doctors in training at all stages of their career. It is easy to read and find information, with short paragraphs and bullet points of text, interspersed with figures and tables. The chapters range from epidemiology and making a diagnosis through to acute and long-term asthma management. In addition, there are separate chapters focusing on specific aspects of asthma such as occupational, and childhood disease as well as differentiating between what investigations and management is appropriate in a hospital or primary care setting.

The last few chapters discuss how thoughts around diagnosis and management are likely to change in the future and signpost additional resources for further reading. There is an excellent chapter on clinical cases where specific aspects are covered in detail such as dealing with severe chronic asthma, asthma in

pregnancy and differentiating asthma from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Finally there is a section listing different inhaler devices, doses and how to use them. Overall this book provides a solid resource for those with an interest in asthma. The ease of reading makes it useful to have on hand in a busy clinical setting.

*JK Quint, National Heart and Lung Institute, Imperial College, London*

### Chestnut's Obstetric Anesthesia: Principles and Practice (6th edn)

**Edited by David H Chestnut, Cynthia A Wong, Lawrence C Tsen et al**  
**Elsevier 2019**  
**Price £193.99. Pp 1382**  
**ISBN 9780323566889**

First published 25 years ago, this book is considered by many to be the authoritative text on obstetric anaesthesia. In sticking to its original goals – that is i) to collate the most important information that anaesthetists should know about obstetrics, and ii) to prepare a thorough and user-friendly review of anaesthesia care for obstetric patients, the 1382 pages of facts and figures leave no stone unturned.

Comprised of 10 parts including 54 chapters (and an appendix), this edition has been thoroughly edited and re-vamped, with new chapters added such as 'chronic pain during and after pregnancy'. The chapters cover a broad range of pathologies and topics, and while the sheer mass of content could have easily overwhelmed the reader, the editors have done a commendable job at keeping it surprisingly easy to read and digest.

Each chapter begins with a brief introduction, and is followed by clearly apportioned (and labelled) text, boxes of relevant definitions, well-defined diagrams, and finally the 'key points' – which I read first to give me a grounding of what lay ahead. There is undeniably an American slant to the book (including the obvious dissimilarities in spelling), but collectively the authors represent nine countries and five continents, so it does give a global insight.

For those who have chosen a career in obstetric anaesthesia (and can bring themselves to part with £193.99), this is a very worthy investment as it offers unparalleled coverage of anaesthesia for obstetric patients.

*Edward Gilbert-Kawai, Royal London Hospital, London*