

The Doctor's Internet Handbook

Robert Kiley
Royal Society of Medicine Press 1998
Price £6.99. Pp 75
ISBN 1 85315 370 2

This small handbook is a compilation of revised and updated articles which were originally published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* and written by Robert Kiley, Information Service Manager at the Wellcome Trust. There are 13 chapters, each covering different medical aspects of the World Wide Web spread over 72 pages with an extensive index. Readers are also encouraged to visit the Handbook's supporting web site, which has links to all the sites mentioned in it.

Mr Kiley has written clear and succinct accounts of how doctors should search the web for relevant, current and accurate medical information — an increasingly rare commodity as the Internet becomes engulfed by its own success. The handbook also has a number of interesting chapters covering web sites providing material on medical education, health statistics and consumer health information.

I would recommend this book to any busy doctor who wishes to retrieve information from the web on a particular subject without wading through cyberjunk. I will certainly be keeping my copy beside my personal computer as an invaluable guidebook!

Richard Lau, St George's Hospital, London

Lung Cancer (2nd edn)

Edited by Jack A Roth, James D Cox,
Waun Ki Hong
Blackwell Science 1998
Price £75.00. Pp 394
ISBN 0 865 42573 6

The title of this 400-page volume beguiles. One might have been forgiven for thinking that what one was going to read was a textbook on lung cancer with a comprehensive coverage of prevention, diagnosis and treatment. Not so. It consists, in fact, of a detailed update and discussion of the important growing points in this disease. It is targeted very definitely at a specialist audi-

ence, chest physicians, surgeons, oncologists and other researchers in the field who want to have a thorough review, with pointers to the future.

Three distinguished editors, from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Centre, and 31 colleagues predominantly from the USA, have updated their first edition which was produced 4 years ago. Here we have scholarly essays with plentiful references, some of which are as recent as 1997, and which give the interested reader a detailed insight into work in progress.

The range of articles is wide. In general the authors write with enough background comment to make the non-specialist able to understand some of the more esoteric lines of work. The 20 chapters range between discussions of susceptibility and pre-neoplasia, to surgical techniques such as lung-sparing operations, conformal radiotherapy, chemoprevention, molecular detection, photodynamic therapy and genetic manipulation for the treatment of lung cancer.

With respect to individual chapters, I noted with interest that while there is familial predisposition (a question which I am often asked in clinic), candidate genes have not yet been recognized. There is considerable interest at the moment about whether we can recognize pre-neoplasia and thereby more effectively screen high-risk individuals, but Lee and co-authors point out that it is possible that between 10 and 20 mutations take place in cells before they become malignant and there may be several non-malignant genetic changes in tobacco-exposed bronchial epithelium, thus to pick out the key change which leads to neoplasia may be very difficult.

Moving to treatment, the brief chapter on pre-operative evaluation of patients makes a case for considering exercise testing as an important component and using the predicted VO_2 peak rather than an absolute value which is currently in most algorithms, including that of the British Thoracic Society. Ginsburg makes a strong case for considering that operations less than lobectomy for peripheral lesions, should be exceptional and done only if lobectomy is technically or physiologically impossible. The chapter on high-dose

rate endobronchial brachytherapy was disappointing. There was no consideration of the risk of late haemoptysis which is the major worry, and I did not leave the chapter knowing really whether this useful technique was a viable alternative to external beam treatment as a first option or whether it needs to be confined to re-treatment. Likewise, there is an erudite discussion of fluorescence bronchoscopy, but I did not gather clearly whether this technique is still just of research interest or has a definite role in management. Intrapleural photodynamic therapy, perhaps for mesothelioma or occasional malignant effusions of other cause, sounds promising but in this chapter the references cease in 1994 which leaves the reader wondering whether more has happened since the authors wrote their contribution.

Overall, however, I am quite sure that physicians and surgeons in the field would find this a very valuable resource when considering some of the more complex technical advances in the management of lung cancer and, not less important, very useful indeed when patients who have surfed the Internet ask them penetrating questions.

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Lecture Notes on Urology (5th edn)

John Blandy
Blackwell Science 1998
Price £22.95. Pp 288
ISBN 0 632 04202 8

John Blandy has produced, once again, a very useful and clear guide to medical students, nurses and housemen engaged in the field of urology. The line drawings for which he is well noted are of exceptional clarity and are very useful, in not only explaining various conditions and pathologies but also allowing these to be remembered by the reader.

The photographs are somewhat lack-lustre, but in view of the reasonable price of the book I think are perfectly adequate for the market for whom this book is intended. I can thoroughly recommend the book for revision and for those wishing to get a basic idea of urological surgery, as it is both good value and illuminating.

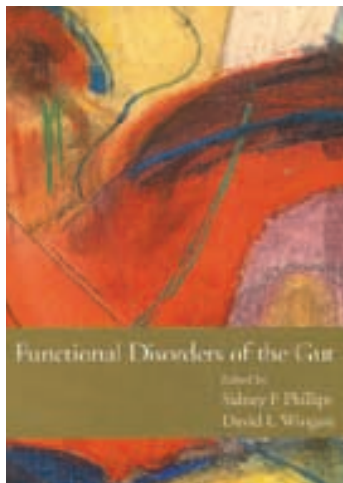
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Functional Disorders of the Gut

Edited by Sidney F Phillips, David L Wingate
Churchill Livingstone 1998
Price £35.00. Pp 360
ISBN 0 443 05420 7

This multi-authored book of 360 pages with references up to 1996 is a Churchill Livingstone publication in a monochromatic format. The preface sets the scene well by asking the question 'what are the functional disorders of the gut and how can they be characterized?', and answering 'not by a coherent corpus of solid scientific evidence'. Experts were chosen from the UK and North America, given their briefs and have returned an authoritative and comprehensive review that is both familiar and unfamiliar to the clinical and research gastroenterologist.

The book divides into three sections, the first entitled 'Biology of functional disorders'. This section is well written, providing a clear exposition of likely pathophysiological factors including the brain-gut axis



neurochemistry, pharmacology and epidemiology. The second section, entitled 'Regional syndromes: clinical physiology and clinical management', is the major part of the book and has some overlap of chapters. Nevertheless, there are some excellent contributions, from the editors (IBS management), Professor Malagelada (management of upper GI disorders) and Professor Hogan (biliary tract symptoms and their management). The section is a useful well-referenced aid to clinical management.

The third section entitled 'Functional disorders in context', written by Professor Spiro, is a pleasure to read. It is only 5 pages long but is of immense value. The text jumps off the page directly into the reader's cortex, embedding in the deep memory banks as a common sense practical approach to managing most of the disorders described in the preceding 355 pages.
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