

Teaching and Training Techniques for Hospital Doctors

Edited by Trevor Bayley and Michael Drury
Radcliffe Press 1998
Pp 124. Price £18.50
ISBN 1 85775 173 6

There are currently few books to help hospital doctors become more effective teachers. This publication sets out to 'provide a practical guide for hospital doctors wishing to become better teachers'. There are eight chapters by seven different authors, each chapter stands alone and covers one or more aspects of developing more effective skills to help students and junior doctors learn in a hospital environment.

Each chapter includes summaries of key points, making rapid access easy. I found the chapter on teaching methods for consultants particularly useful, the style is clear and the chapter provides some useful pointers to explain why our current practises in medical education have developed. I particularly liked the concept that we must professionalize our approach to teaching and learning to such a degree that we would be proud that our clinical abilities could be judged by our approach to teaching.

The chapter on teaching communication skills is also helpful and practical. It suggests ways in which the tools that have been used effectively in general practice for many years could be modified for teaching and assessment in a hospital setting.

Unfortunately the chapters do not fit well to form a coherent publication. There is frequent repetition, and throughout the book the authors disagree with each other, for example there are two conflicting views on the teaching ward round, and with current thinking. None of the chapters are referenced. An interested reader is therefore not only denied the opportunity of delving further into an area of interest, but they are unable to review the evidence to decide which of the conflicting views they should accept.

Jacky Hayden, University of Manchester

An Atlas of Diagnostic Radiology in Gastroenterology

Ramsay Vallance
Blackwell Science 1998
Pp 396. Price £120.00
ISBN 0 632 05022 5

One of the reasons I ended up in radiology is because I acquire far more information from pictures than any other medium. Most people will agree that a textbook without images is indigestible, so it is a pleasant surprise to receive a radiology atlas to review. A book whose stated aim is to provide a wide range of pictures with an emphasis on image quality is a timely arrival when departments have limited budgets, restricting trainees and consultants to copying films.

The format of the book is rather Crohn's like, involving the whole gastrointestinal (GI) tract from mouth to anus, and covering most connected glands or organs on the way. Excellent use of good quality barium material correlated with computed tomography (CT) and high resolution endoscopic ultrasound (EUS) graces the gut tube chapters. CT and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the liver and pancreas with the latest contrast agents contain many clear examples of a wide range of pathologies. The biliary tree section has detailed cholangiograms of most pathologies correlated with ultrasound, CT, angiography, EUS, and plain radiography.

Owing to the rapid rate of improvement of most imaging technology, readers of this book will always find some better cross-sectional images or new techniques in their own institutions, but probably not the barium pictures or EUS. With this in mind the areas I would like to see more of in subsequent editions are magnetic resonance cholangio-pancreatography, pelvic MRI for fistulas, anal endosonography and defecating proctography. This would truly cover one end of GI radiology to the other.

I got a great deal from this book and would recommend it to all radiology libraries, FRCR 2 candidates, GI radiologists, physicians and trainees.

Chris Hare, UCL Hospitals, London

Seminars in Old Age Psychiatry

Edited by Rob Butler and Brice Pitt
Gaskell 1998
Pp 356. Price £17.50
ISBN 1 901242 21 8

The College Seminars Series, published by the Royal College of Psychiatrists, has set a high standard of up-to-date texts aimed at psychiatrists in training. This book fully lives up to the standard: 23 experts in the fields covering 21 topics in brief, well informed and referenced chapters.

Surprisingly there was little overlap except on psychopharmacology where the chapter might have confined itself to drug metabolism in the elderly. It was surprising that no mention was made of venlafaxine, a drug which is becoming acknowledged for use in resistant depression, and neuroleptics were compared in a table without mention of 5-hydroxytryptamine (HT)₂ blockade.

I would also question the preference for oral medication in paraphrenics who for obvious reasons are unlikely to be compliant, the use of haloperidol for acute sedation rather than droperidol, and the use of clozapine in demented subjects who are unlikely to be able to give informed consent when there other effective atypical antipsychotics.

Two other serious omissions were the absence of an assessment procedure for subcortical or fronto-temporal dementias, a form of dementia which is often missed with disastrous consequences, and the failure to recommend thiamine in the treatment of delirium. It was surprising that in the assessment no mention was made of a sexual history. These caveats aside, this is an excellent guide to the subject which should be bought by every trainee and most consultants. There is a particularly lucid account of the law in this area by Peter Jeffries.

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Surgery of the Pancreas (2nd edn)

Edited by Michael Trede, Sir David C Carter
Churchill Livingstone 1998
Pp 709. Price £125.00
ISBN 0 443 05522 X

This textbook reaches the market place at the end of the millennium, and so it is appropriate that the opening chapter is a comprehensive review of pancreatic history. References to the pancreas as a gland date back over two millennia but surgical procedures are only a feature of this century. Indeed the range of the contributors' specialities indicate the reliance surgeons place on the team approach now necessary to run an effective pancreatic practice.

This book provides a thorough overview of pancreatic disease as it affects the surgeon, and in this respect offers an excellent support to senior surgical trainees wishing to specialize in this area. It is full of common-sense advice and I particularly enjoyed the balanced and humane discussion on the preoperative decision-making for patients with pancreatic cancer; evidence of the immense experi-

ence of the editors. The difficulty books such as these have in serving the more experienced surgeon, but not one who is committed totally to a pancreatic service, is whether they can help decision-making in the rare 'difficult' case. Here the book does not succeed, but I suspect that it was not the intention of the authors to do so as such cases often need to be discussed or referred on.

A few remarks on presentation. A book which has to reproduce scans, operative diagrams, pathological data and endoscopic findings without recourse to colour is going to have its work cut out to provide level clarity. This difficulty will be compounded when a book is fortunate enough to have the services of a medical artist as skilled and clear as Gillian Lee. It is revealing to compare her operative drawings with others reproduced in the book and one realizes how good she is. A final comment on the front cover. The copy I was asked to review has a well designed cover spoilt by shoddy looking 'tippex' lettering not worthy of such a book.

In summary, a book which will serve the senior trainee well and is fairly priced.

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