

Laboratory-acquired Infections: History, Incidence, Causes and Prevention (4th edn)

CH Collins, DA Kennedy
Butterworth Heinemann 1999
Price £18.99. Pp 324
ISBN 0 7506 4023 5

The new edition of this book continues to be the most authoritative text on the subject of laboratory-acquired infections. In this fourth edition Dr Collins had been joined by a co-author and they concern themselves with the history, incidence, causes and prevention of laboratory-acquired infection, but with due emphasis on the latter.

Although the overall format of the book is essentially unchanged the content has been thoroughly updated to take account of the ever changing developments in laboratory practice. Some pathogens are now less commonly encountered in the UK whereas new pathogens are emerging and some old pathogens are re-emerging. This is well recognized by the authors with the result that the subject material remains topical and relevant. Advances in molecular biology and genetic modification are now included in a new chapter as is information regarding the use of laboratory animals.

The UK has become a nation of policy writers and compounded with the requirements of European harmonization there is now an abundance of new regulations and recommendations with regard to laboratory safety. As far as possible the authors have managed to include all the recent changes but understandably, since publication the book is already out of date in a few areas, e.g. the new regulations for transport of specimens by post.

I was disappointed only with the chapter concerning blood-borne infections where I felt there was insufficient detail. The tables giving details of post-exposure prophylaxis following inoculation injuries appear to be based on American rather than British practice and there was virtually no mention of hepatitis C virus.

Overall this is a comprehensive, well-written book that should be available to all those who work in diagnostic laboratories, related fields and occupational health.

Peter Riley, Mayday University Hospital, Surrey

Lecture Notes on Respiratory Medicine (5th edn)

SJ Bourke, RAL Brewis
Blackwell Science 1998
Price £14.95. Pp 205
ISBN 0 632 04968 5

The 5th edition of *Lecture Notes on Respiratory Medicine* is an excellent book. It succeeds in its aim 'to provide a concise review of respiratory medicine for both student and practitioner'. It is comprehensive, yet never turgid and focuses on practical management throughout.

Its layout is traditional with an opening section covering respiratory structure and function. This is

clear and concise and allows the reader to gain a general understanding of the respiratory anatomy and physiology required for clinical thoracic medicine. It also includes discussion of the clinical approach to the patient. This rightly stresses the importance of history taking. One useful addition within this section I feel would have been a table summarizing the relationship between the rate of onset of breathlessness and its possible causes. The final part of the first section covers radiological investigations. Again this serves to highlight those features relevant to clinical care.

A disease-based approach is used for the remainder of the book. This covers traditional restrictive, obstructive and infective lung diseases as well as sections on immunosuppression, lung transplantation, sleep disordered breathing and adult respiratory distress syndrome.

Throughout the text the authors emphasize the importance of a holistic patient-centred approach. For example, the chapter on asthma highlights patient education while that on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease emphasizes the role of pulmonary rehabilitation and smoking cessation. The chapter on lung cancer stresses the importance of good communication (both to the patient, and within a multidisciplinary team) in the provision of good quality care.

The text is up-to-date and accurate, although in a book of this size inevitably there will be some omissions. Nothing was mentioned regarding the use of leukotriene receptor antagonists in asthma management, and before the next edition comes out this may be a regrettable lapse. The relative paucity of information on intensive care and ventilation suggests that this book is written for the UK rather than the American market.

Overall the quality of its text, illustrations and indexing make this one of the best books around for its size and price.

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Clinical Risk Modification: A Route for Clinical Governance?

Edited by Jo Wilson and John Tingle
Butterworth Heinemann 1999
Price £17.99. Pp 256
ISBN 0 7506 2939 8

Clinical governance fever has gripped the NHS. Managers and senior clinicians think about it, talk about it and are struggling to implement it. The editors of this book, a senior nurse and a lawyer with an interest and substantial experience in clinical risk management, use clinical risk modification as the framework within which to develop an approach to clinical governance. The hypothesis of the book is that if issues of clinical risk management are appropriately addressed those relating to clinical governance will be as well.

This is a multi-author book, reflecting the views and experience from 10 contributors from primary and secondary health care, legal and clinical risk departments. This continuing change

of focus as the book progresses establishes a momentum, which urges the reader on. But while this diversity is one of the strengths of the book, it is also one of its weaknesses. Each of the individual essays could stand alone — together they lack editorial coherence.

Despite this weakness the book contains a great deal of information about clinical risk management and its relevance to clinical governance. It makes clear the importance of having systems and processes in place within organizations — both hospital and primary care groups/trusts — which support good risk management practice and thereby clinical governance. The editors of the book summarize the relationship — 'Quality and risk are two sides of the same coin and they must work in synergy together with the legal system to provide better patient care'. This book will certainly help to support the understanding of that relationship.

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Blood Pressure Measurement (CD-ROM)

British Hypertension Society
BMJ Publishing Group 1999
Price £50.00
ISBN 0 7279 1374 3

Taking a blood pressure is often one of the earliest exposures to clinical medicine in the undergraduate curriculum. Lifelong treatment is dished out on the basis of high readings, and at the foot of every hospital bed lies a chart of blood pressure recordings. Yet several studies have shown that many practitioners (nurses and doctors) use inappropriate techniques to record pressure, that equipment is often faulty, inaccurate or positioned incorrectly, and that the same level of pressure will be recorded differently by different individuals.

On this background, the CD ROM on Blood Pressure Measurement produced by the British Hypertension Society is welcome. It is a user-friendly piece of software that is more than simply a book in electronic form. There are useful video clips illustrating the text, and some audio examples of what should be heard. I suppose this is really targeted at nurse practitioners but I think it also would have a useful place in medical education, provided a multi-user licence could be obtained.

This leads on to the price. £50 seems a bit steep to me, but I suppose the idea is that each general practice might buy one copy. However, it is a very short CD-ROM that only covers measurement — even though it does include useful sections on measurement in children, the obese patient and other special circumstances. Perhaps it should have been combined with the recent BHS treatment guidelines, some information on diet and hypertension and some useful information sheets that could be printed for patients?

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