

Current Therapy of Trauma (4th edn)

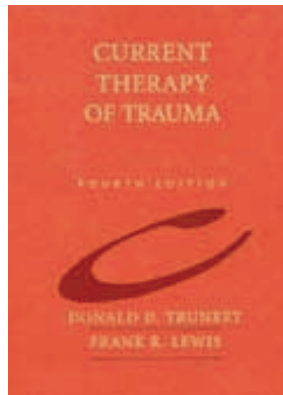
Edited by Donald Trunkey, Frank Lewis
Mosby 1999

Price £54.00. Pp 385
ISBN 0 8151 6545 5

This book is in the Mosby Current Therapy series. The contributor list is a 'Who's Who' of North American trauma practitioners. The chapters are written with authority and say that these people actually deal with trauma, rather than just write about it.

In their introduction the editors state that they have 'maintained this edition as a practical compendium of acute trauma management'. In fact, the book goes much further than this. The section on trauma systems addresses the difficult issues of paying for trauma care and whether this can be reconciled with the business interests of American managed care organizations. The section entitled 'frontiers' considers new and potential therapies for trauma management.

On first glance the layout of the book is a bit intimidating: pages of close text, algorithms and busy diagrams. The chapters are well written and



understandable. This reviewer particularly liked the section on prehospital trauma care. There are a number of controversies in prehospital care. These include the place of prehospital fluid therapy in resuscitation, the conflict between 'stay and play at the scene' vs 'scoop and run to hospital', and the problem of field triaging casualties to the most appropriate hospital. These topics are discussed and balanced views given.

The book is written for a North American audience and UK readers will find areas where their practice differs, for example, most UK anaesthetists would give opiates earlier to the trauma patient than advocated in the trauma anaesthesia chapter. Much of the book assumes a basic knowledge of trauma care and recent trauma literature. The chapters finish with a list of recommended reading rather than references.

This book deserves a place as a reference text in departments of accident and emergency, anaesthesia, intensive care and surgery who are dealing with the seriously injured.

PF Mahoney, University College London Medical School

Handbook of ICU Therapy

Edited by I McConachie
Greenwich Medical Media 1999
Price £16.50. Pp 244
ISBN 1 900 151 782

This is a great little book, providing a concise but informed approach to the field of intensive care medicine. Because of its small size, however, this style can in places appear either superficial or too didactic. Although it states that it is aimed at a broad range of readers in the field of intensive care, the authors assume a level of knowledge above that of the inexperienced practitioner; the book will be especially of use to those approaching exams in the subject.

Each chapter covers more than just the essentials, entering into relevant debates and providing up-to-date references. The layout is clear, leading the reader to the essential points rapidly and in a logical progression. What is most enjoyable are the many little nuggets of practical information tucked into each chapter. Unfortunately the authors have made extremely limited use of figures and tables which, in a book aiming to eliminate all superfluous material, can be somewhat of a limitation. Certainly some topics lend themselves to the succinct approach adopted in this

book but others require a more expansive style — a broader introduction or more space to balance both sides of the argument — and this is where the use of illustrations would help. Overall, however, it is a valuable contribution to the intensive care literature.

Geoff Bellinghan, University College London

Davidson's Principles and Practice of Medicine (18th edn)

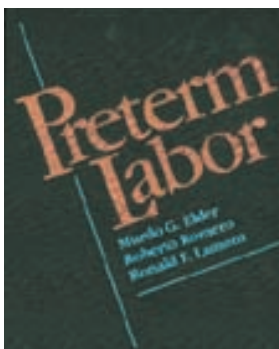
Edited by Christopher Haslett, Edwin R Chilvers, John AA Hunter, Nicholas A Boon
Churchill Livingstone 1999
Price £29.95. Pp 1175
ISBN 0 443 05944 6

Davidson's Principles and Practice of Medicine has become something of an institution after almost 50 years in print, and this 18th edition will no doubt be as popular as ever with final year medical students and beyond. This version improves upon its predecessors by developing sections covering major manifestations for most chapters, and this technique of exploring the clues that help distinguish serious from trivial causes of common symptoms is one of the book's strengths. The neurology section in particular benefits from this approach.

The chapters begin by reviewing related basic science, relevant imaging techniques and other investigations pertinent to the system in question. The text is interspersed with colour photography, information boxes, tables and diagrams, the use of which has allowed greater coverage without increasing the book's weight, according to the editors. I would have preferred the information boxes to have contained summaries of key points, since one criticism of the text would be that, although comprehensive, the degree of detail can leave the reader missing the wood for the trees. For example, in the section on gastrointestinal manifestations of AIDS, Mallory Weiss tear and oesophageal varices are included, on the bases that homosexual or intravenous drug using patients may have 'high alcohol intake' and are at risk of hepatitis B or C.

On the whole, the changes made to this edition are welcome improvements, but a clearer distinction between important or common features, and those that are tenuously associated or rare would help make this an even better reference book for the medical students who remain its main target audience.

Jonathan Carlidge, Whittington Hospital, London



Preterm Labor

Murdo G Elder, Roberto Romero, Ronald F Lamont
Churchill Livingstone 1999
Price £73.00. Pp 553
ISBN 0 443 05857 1

As preterm delivery is one of the commonest causes of neonatal death in the Western world, it is fitting that the book *Preterm Labor* should be constantly updated and redrafted. This multiauthor text has combined individual expertise, substantive opinion and analysis of evidence-based practice into one book whose sole purpose is to make the reader think and act appropriately in this challenging clinical area. Elder, Romero and Lamont have succeeded in their task.

The chapters are written by authors who are clearly recognized as influential in their field. Interestingly, the book encourages a well-rounded view, avoiding individual preference, e.g. the chapter on *Ultrasound evaluation of the cervix* is written by Anderson, while the next chapter on *Contraction monitoring* is written by Jay Iams, the latter being a recognized world authority on the use of ultrasound surveillance of the pregnant cervix. This level of objectivity allows the authors to include a comprehensive bibliography without restriction or lack of consideration. As such the reader is left with a positive attitude that each subject area has been correctly assessed and clearly written.

A good book for every practising obstetrician to buy.
Roy G Farquharson, Liverpool Women's Hospital