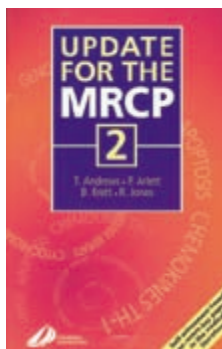


Update for the MRCP 2

T Andrews, P Arlett, B Brett, R Jones
Churchill Livingstone 2000
Price £16.95. Pp 295
ISBN 0 443 06257 9

This sequel to *Update for the MRCP* is designed to be complimentary to its predecessor. It aims to address a major problem for those attempting the MRCP part 1 or part 2 examinations: approaching the seemingly limitless and ever-expanding syllabus, and assimilating information on recent advances in key areas.

The main part of the book is 150 multiple choice questions, divided into the fifteen key areas of general medicine. Each question forms the basis of a review of the area the question addressed. Each question is said to have been chosen as an introduction to an area where key advances have been made recently. Thus the reader is provided with 150 reviews of key advances — information not available in such an accessible form anywhere else. The reviews themselves are concise and informative yet interesting and readable.



Some sections are excellent, e.g. those on human immunodeficiency virus, therapeutics and basic science. These adhere to the principles of the book, providing invaluable reviews of key recent advances which all MRCP candidates should be familiar with. Unfortunately other sections are less faithful to the ideology of the book. The section on infectious diseases, for example, fails to concentrate on recent key advances and provides little information that cannot be found in most standard textbooks.

Two subsequent sections provide a list of possible viva topics (but with no discussion or answers) and an extensive list of references. These are likely to be of less use to the candidate trying to assimilate as many facts as possible as efficiently as possible.

The book aspires to provide concise, up-to-date information on key advances which cannot easily be found elsewhere. While some sections do this brilliantly, others disappoint. Nevertheless, if used in conjunction with other texts, this book will provide many useful lessons for the MRCP candidate.

Paul Beirne, Barnet General Hospital, London

Condoms

Edited by Adrian Mindel
BMJ Publishing Group 2000
Price £19.95. Pp 230
ISBN 0 7279 1267 4

'Prevention is better than cure'. Since the advent of AIDS almost 20 years ago, we've all been told to advocate condoms as a means of preventing HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases as well as condoms' other purpose, contraception. Audit of efficiency of condoms has not always followed advocacy. Professor Mindel should be congratulated in bringing together a team of experts who make learning about the condom useful and interesting.

Here are some highlights: chapters on the history of condoms, international quality standards, contraceptive efficacy of the male condom, condoms for the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, spermicides and virucides, condoms and commercial sex, and condoms for anal sex are enormously useful. Any reader will learn a lot about male to male sex in the last chapter mentioned.

The female condom has great potential but still needs much research and there is an article in this book which

highlights the many problems. How do we get people to use them and what do they do with them once used? Well, dear reader, look in the last chapter. This is a more than useful book which should be not on the shelf but on the desk of all of us who deal with the vagaries of human behaviour.

Michael Waugh, Leeds General Infirmary

Colour Atlas Thyroid Disease CD-ROM

Edited by Werner Langsteger
Blackwell Science 2000
Price £125
ISBN 3 893412 272 2

Do not expect a CD-ROM covering clinical aspects of thyroid disease. First I had to modify my computer to 65536 colours (16 bit), although thankfully it already had a double speed CD-ROM drive, 36 MB of free disc space and a Pentium processor.

The atlas is divided into 9 investigation sections and 8 pathology sections. The investigation sections are: ultrasound (204 images), scintigraphy (139 images), fine needle aspiration (20 images), cytology (125 images), preoperative scintigraphic evaluation (18 images), surgery (88 images), pathol-

ogy (219 images), postoperative care (44 images), and imagery of the parathyroid (17 images). The pathology sections cover all aspects of the thyroid, from normal to neoplasia.

Once a desired topic has been selected, one can easily access all the relevant investigative and pathological images, e.g. select malignant tumours and view images from ultrasound to pathological slides (293 images). Each slide has a one-sentence summary.

Given the array of pathology presented within the atlas it is surprising that there is no attempt to provide any reference to clinical presentation, signs or management protocols. There is a section termed 'List of Notes' which can be edited for personal reference, but initially this is empty. At least some clinical reference could have been included here.

While the atlas provides a great source of information, my preference would have been for this to be from patient presentation pathology. The atlas will be best at home in the thyroid specialist's library, but lacking the clinical aspects cannot be recommended as a replacement for existing texts and internet sites.
SJ Hurel, Middlesex Hospital