

RCOG Dialog Distance Interactive Learning in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Noor Informatics Electronic Publishing 1998
Price £295.00
ISSN 1460 258X

This innovative learning project, which is recognized for continuing medical education (CME) by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, holds considerable attraction and user friendly methodology. In total, there are 50 clinical case scenarios comprising case history, management, justification as well as a relevant list and the origin of the contributor. The wide range of clinical scenarios gives plenty of scope for maintaining interest 'at the screen' and certainly provides enough in depth analysis to keep the clinician up to date.

If this is the way ahead, the RCOG have made a good start and will allow clinicians to continue their CME at home as well as at work during available time.

Roy G Farquharson, Liverpool Women's Hospital

Current Review of Cerebrovascular Diseases (3rd edn)

Edited by Marc Fisher, Julien Bougouslavsky
Butterworth Heinemann 1999
Price £70.00. Pp 231
ISBN 0 7506 7119

The editors of this well-produced hardback book have mainly reviewed developments over the last 3 years. While there have not been any true breakthroughs in that time, steady progress has been made. For those involved in the acute management of stroke, which must include most hospital physicians, this book provides excellent reference material across the whole field without having to indulge in tedious literature searches. Most citations are from 1997 and 1998 and the text is more up to date than some journal editorials.

There are four main sections to the contents: basic science, diagnostics, clinical aspects and treatment modalities. In the first section, I particularly enjoyed the chapters on the functions of the vascular endothelium ('not just plastic wrap') and on the ischaemic penumbra. The two chapters in the diagnostics section on magnetic resonance were a bit disappointing. However, I learnt from 'New trends in neurosonology' that HITS (high intensity transient

signals), typically produced in the middle cerebral artery when the surgeon does a carotid endarterectomy, have been re-christened MES (microembolic signals). I shall be able to impress all my radiological colleagues now!

As well as expected reviews of aspirin, neuroprotection and thrombolysis, the clinical areas often ignored by researchers, e.g. venous thrombosis, aortic arch disease and vascular dementia, are also covered in detail. There is also a good update on subarachnoid haemorrhage, including causes other than aneurysms, although the section on endovascular treatment was disappointingly brief. However, I later discovered much more on stents and coils in the chapter on surgical therapy. Better editing might have avoided this confusion and the risk of upsetting interventional radiologists.

Nevertheless, I went out and bought the last, second edition of this impressive book as soon as it was published and would thoroughly recommend this third edition too.

Richard Hardie, St George's Hospital, London

Angina Pectoris in Clinical Practice

Edited by Peter M Schofield
Martin Dunitz 1999
Price £25.00. Pp 162
ISBN 1 85317 7202

Angina Pectoris in Clinical Practice is a short book. It fits into the pocket, and has nine chapters covering clinical history and examination through to new technologies. On the way it passes non-invasive investigation, management of risk factors, antiangina medication as well as management using interventional techniques. It is always difficult for books, especially of this size, to be up to date but that appears to be exactly what it is. Each chapter is written clearly and contains data from papers published as recently as 1999. Information is succinct and distilled into readable sections. Even the authors of chapters who may not have been the most likely to write on their designated subject appear to have come up trumps with clear concise information about contemporary management. I am sure this is the consequence of exacting and sophisticated editing by Peter Schofield.

Who would this book be best read by? I would recommend it to medical students, junior/senior

house officers and those starting their specialist registrar training in cardiology. Even those undertaking other specialist training would benefit from having this on their shelf. I think it is a delightful book, very well produced and good value at £25.

AH Gershlick, Leicester Royal Infirmary

Involving Patients and the Public: how to do it better

Ruth Chambers
Radcliffe Medical Press 1999
Price £17.95. Pp 183
ISBN 1 85775 393 3

The benefits of greater involvement by the public in the NHS have now been accepted by most health-care workers. This book sets out to address, in a comprehensive way, the various means by which the NHS should consult patients and the public. The author is convincing about why this must be done properly; it must not become a cynical public relations exercise.

The book details methods of gathering information from individual members of the general public and groups and what techniques to employ in differing situations. Although chapters contain extensive material about complex issues, the text is easy to read and understand. The book is well supported by highlighted areas that give useful examples of the consultation process in action. Entertaining cartoons provide light relief apart from one blatantly ageist one in the first chapter. Tables could have been used more extensively to break up the text.

Unfortunately, some of the chapter headlines, such as 'Doing it right: boring but necessary' are off-putting and unnecessary — this was one of the best chapters. The final chapter about methods of giving the public more information is too short for such a huge topic and does not fit in with the rest of the book, which emphasizes the exchange of information between the NHS and the public.

Apart from these minor criticisms, this is a good book which gives detailed and practical advice on this important and expanding part of the health service and will be of considerable value to clinicians, managers, researchers and non-governmental organizations.

K Walsh, G Bennett, Royal London Hospital

Children's Fractures

Anna Thornton, Catherine Gyll
WB Saunders 1999
Price £39.95. Pp 208
ISBN 0 7020 2164 4

It was with considerable interest that I received this book to review and I have read it in depth. The book contains a wealth of bullet point-type comment about different fractures that occur in children.

The images are small, to fit into the small format of this book. There are many illustrations, many of which show the pathology very well. The quality in some is not optimal and it is difficult to identify the pathology, especially in the subtle injuries.

Nonetheless the authors are to be congratulated on what is very clearly a magnum opus. They have gathered together most of the variants of fractures seen in children and the book contains much useful material.

Helen Carty, Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool

