

## **Interactive Haematology Imagebank CD-ROM**

Barbara J Bain  
Blackwell Science 1999  
Price £99.50  
ISBN 0 632 05321 6

This is a high-tech resource from an acknowledged national expert in the field of blood cell morphology. In addition to incorporating the best features of a textbook, it uses the interactive approach to speed up learning and testing.

Even those shy of computers need not fear as the telephone number of a helpline is provided with the CD and once installed the program is extremely simple to use. It is an ambitious project with material for everyone from medical students up to experienced haematologists and contains video clips demonstrating taking of a bone marrow sample and spreading slides. The best features are the high quality pictures, the commentary which can be called up by one click of the mouse and the self-testing facility available at three levels of expertise with 200 pictures at each level.

The new technology is used well with simple cross referencing enabling one to learn quickly; it was very popular among all staff in our department. Occasional cells seemed to be stained in unusual hues but this happens in real life too. Every hospital (and every haematologist's home?) should have a copy of this. The CD allows you to study in private or project the images onto a screen for large or small group teaching without the chores of making, staining and locating photographic studies.

*EJ Watts, Basildon and Thurrock NHS Trust*

## **Fundamentals of Anaesthesia**

Edited by Colin Pinnock, Ted Lin, Tim Smith  
Greenwich Medical Media 1999  
Price £55.00. Pp 867  
ISBN 1 900151 61 8

The primary objective of this new textbook of anaesthesia is to cover the syllabus for the primary FRCA. As such it covers physiology, pharmacology, physics, clinical measurement, statistics, anatomy, anaesthetic equipment and clinical anaesthesia in one moderately sized book.

The physiology section is thorough yet easy to comprehend. In the pharmacology section pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics are well covered with key equations being stressed and clear explanations given. Specific drug pharmacology includes a summary of the properties of each drug in a concise format at the end of each chapter which is useful for quick reference.

The principles of both general and regional anaesthetic management are covered but information about specialist anaesthesia is not included. Importantly, the management of med-

ical and anaesthetic emergencies is highlighted and there is good coverage of trauma care. It includes the latest guidelines produced by the Association of Anaesthetists and the European Resuscitation Council. It is, however, brief in its coverage of certain topics, especially the medical management of disease and anaesthetic equipment.

Undoubtedly, one of the major strengths of this book is the clear presentation of data with the use of lists and summary boxes. There are places where more explanation may be required and for this it does provide references.

In summary, this book will give the new anaesthetist a good understanding of basic sciences and the principles of anaesthesia. It would certainly fulfil its role as the main textbook for primary FRCA preparation.

*Ruth Hurley, University College London Hospitals*

## **Challenges in Breast Cancer**

Edited by Ian S Fentiman  
Blackwell Science 1999  
Price £69.50. Pp 268  
ISBN 0 632 05242 2

Is anything established with certainty in either the aetiology, diagnosis or management of breast cancer? This book, designed to challenge a variety of concepts in the field of breast cancer management, provides lively and opinionated views written in a personal but reasoned manner. In many instances established wisdom and orthodoxy are subjected to critical dissection.

This challenging approach is exemplified by two chapters, one covering the role of steroid hormones in the aetiology of breast cancer and the other discussing hormone replacement therapy in treatment. Often contrary views are provided utilizing key publications. Is alcohol really important and does dietary fat play a role? — strong evidence is provided for close associations.

Both local and systemic treatments are covered in a sensible and comprehensive fashion by leaders in the field who have unashamedly combined personal views and extensive experience with comprehensive literature reviews.

I am not sure how much this book adds to the already voluminous literature on breast cancer. I suspect its main target audience will be trainees undertaking higher professional examinations. Certainly higher surgical trainees would be well advised to peruse this volume before their specialist exams. It is likely that their examiners will discuss several of the topics within the context of a viva voce examination.

If I was to choose one particularly interesting and valuable contribution it would be Silverstein's excellent article on DCIS. His care-

fully constructed and reasoned approach to the surgical management of this difficult condition is admirable. It is an article which should probably be read by all 'screeners'.

I would conclude by saying that Ian Fentiman has achieved his objective by 'provoking thought and (probably) stimulating new studies'. It is a book which can be recommended without hesitation.

*I Taylor, Royal Free and UCL Medical School, London*

## **The Telemedicine Tool Kit: a Workbook for NHS Doctors, Nurses and Managers**

Roy Lilley and John Navein  
Radcliffe Medical Press 2000  
Price £30.00. Pp 185  
ISBN 1 85775 480 8

Telemedicine is a term describing the use of information technology (IT) to project medical care at a distance. Like electronic patient records, it is another 'big idea' for the 21st century. The simplest and most reliable form of telemedicine remains the plain old telephone system. However, with the momentum gained from the development of the NHSnet (arguably the world's largest wide area network), it is now possible to use some of this digital capacity to carry text, images (pictures and video) as well as audio information to deliver health care.

How, why and where telemedicine should be implemented are issues that need to be tackled within each service delivery unit. There are, however, elements common to any project covering planning, implementation and the availability of resources. This book covers the first two elements and is aimed at NHS doctors, nurses and managers keen to develop telemedicine as part of a health-care plan. The book is divided into six sections describing, in detail, the planning process that might be used in developing a telemedicine project. The sections are written in a narrative style, with plenty of boxes and signposts giving helpful suggestions and practical hints interspersed with some pretty awful jokes. In general, the text was clear, well-written and informative. I also found the exercise sections quite useful in impressing the importance of good planning. The index, however, was notable by its absence.

While planning is important in any project, its implementation is still dependent on the resources available. Sadly, competing interests in a severely financially stretched NHS make much of this book a superfluous exercise in IT planning, while its relatively high cost (£30) is likely to limit its purchase to medical libraries — or perhaps wealthy NHS managers. To be filed under 'NHS wish list'.

*Richard Lau, St George's Hospital, London*