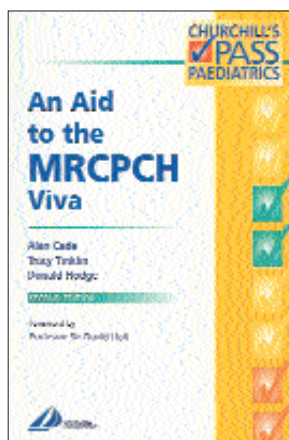


An Aid to the MRCPC Viva

Alan Cade, Tracy Tinklin, Donald Hodge
Churchill Livingstone 2001
Price £22.95. Pp 294
ISBN 0443064946

This enjoyable and easy to read book could equally be called 'Topics for discussion on ward rounds' or 'A primer of current issues in paediatrics'. It is certainly worth a read for the exam candidate as well as the paediatrician or GP. The book goes through preparing for the exam, concentrating on the structure, the approach and the candidate's attitude.

Most topics are covered in 1–3 pages and are well presented and clearly answered at the level



required to show a competence in that area. The breadth of the book covers areas that are difficult to assess in a written exam such as emergencies, social paediatrics and clinically relevant basic sciences. Key references are noted for most topics to facilitate further reading if required. The recent developments and controversies section covers several areas that should be in the candidate's repertoire for the viva.

Overall the textbook contains a wealth of well-designed information. More importantly it should help the candidate secure the right frame of mind and provide some experience of what is expected in the viva.

Pete Smith, Institute of Child Health, London

A Guide to Healthcare Resources on the Internet

Edited by Robert Kiley
RSM Press 2001
Price £9.95. Pp 112
ISBN 1 85315 473 3

I do not consider myself a computer person. Because of my mistrust of anything more technical than a toaster, left to my own devices it is unlikely that I would have looked beyond the cover of any book about computers.

However, I am pleased to report that this is quite a useful book. It is reasonably priced and compact – not too off-putting to people like me. It is easy to use, being broken down into chapters by speciality with sections on sites of interest to medical professionals and those which would be of interest to patients.

The chapters are arranged in no particular order – for example, the first chapter is 'Renal medicine on the internet', while the more general, introductory chapter 'Finding health information on the internet' is left until the end. Some topics seem very specialized for such a small book, such as ultrasound in pregnancy, while many important topics are omitted, for example paediatrics, cardiology and dermatology. It would also have been helpful to have a section on alternative therapies, as patients increasingly ask about this.

I think this book would be particularly useful for medical and nursing stu-

dents and those working in general practice. It may also help those in more specialized fields who need information on fields outside their own. It would be a useful addition to any medical library.

Emma Fox, St George's Hospital, London

Succeeding as a Hospital Doctor

Roger Kirby, Tony Mundy
Health Press 2001
Price £19.50. Pp 178
ISBN 1 899541 68 3

Roger Kirby and Tony Mundy's book is nicely laid out, with effective use of text boxes and colour. It looks and feels good, although the paper can reflect some bright lights irritatingly. The initial 130 pages include excellent summaries of current topics such as appraisal and clinical governance. Research, communications skills and crisis management are covered, as are the usually taboo topics of establishing a private practice and personal finance.

Topics are covered succinctly, a merit for those seeking explanations of current jargon phrases, although the brevity means that the 'party line' on current management fads is not debated. The general approach continues in other sections: there is a good box on designing slides, but the advice to 'take time to learn how to use Microsoft Powerpoint™ properly' could perhaps have included hints on

how to avoid the common disasters. This book should be seen as an introductory guide, not a definitive textbook, but each chapter concludes with a helpful list of further reading.

I approached the second section in which the gurus of medicine give their 'recipes' for success with anticipation. Their responses vary enormously – some interesting, some disappointing – each with a photo that possibly says more about the individual than their writing. Here we find an ebullient bow tie, a superbike, a church organ, a camel and other props, while the less adventurous hide behind studio poses. I won't steal the experts' thunder by disclosing the secrets, except to say that affability, good looks, a happy marriage, and luck seem to figure highly. The concluding section lists some useful addresses.

The publishers have targeted this book at all hospital doctors from medical student upwards. As an established consultant, I enjoyed reading it and gained a voyeuristic delight from the gurus section. Consultant post applicants will gain from the excellent summaries of trendy topics, and the discussion on business and finance. Students and junior doctors may find some topics less relevant to their needs, but at £19.50 this book competes strongly against others of its kind.

Chris Johnson, Southmead Hospital, Bristol