

## OSCEs for Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Edited by A Pickersgill, A Meskhi, S Paul  
BIOS Scientific Publishers 2001  
Price £24.99. Pp 297  
ISBN 1859961770

This book provides an invaluable survival guide for the observed structured clinical examination stations component of the MRCOG part 2 examination. Although aimed primarily as a revision tool for candidates sitting the MRCOG examination, the book may also be beneficial to DRCOG candidates, practising obstetricians and gynaecologists wishing to test their skills and knowledge and perhaps allied professionals actively involved in women's health.

It is certainly a daunting task to mimic a practical examination in the format of a book, but the authors have risen to the challenge, setting out interactive scenarios that easily lend themselves to self-testing. A broad range of topics is ventured, assessing clinical acumen, reasoning ability and knowledge. The different circuits afford the opportunity to practise in a timed situation and comprehensive answers are supported by a select number of useful references, facilitating targeted revision.

There is little to fault in this book, although it might have been useful to allocate a marking scheme to the multifaceted stations to enhance the self-testing experience. It is well-written and is bound to be an indispensable resource for the MRCOG exam candidate.

*F Dawood, Liverpool Women's Hospital*

## Culture, Health and Illness (4th edn)

Edited by Cecil G Herman  
Arnold 2001  
Price £19.99. Pp 328  
ISBN 0750647868

Now in its fourth edition, this useful primer addresses the complex interactions between health, illness and culture from the standpoint of a medical anthropologist. The book is very well structured, with concise chapters and

suggestions for further reading. Each chapter is peppered with case studies illustrating research findings between different ethnic or social groups. However, it attempts – largely successfully – to avoid the stereotypical view that 'all Italians do this and all English do that', and does so by conveying two main themes.

The first theme seems to be that in thinking about what is normal or abnormal and usual or unusual in relation to people's behaviour towards, and beliefs about their health, one needs to consider a whole host of factors: their cultural heritage, ethnicity, religion, gender, education, migration experiences, social class and the meaning to them of their presenting problem. Of course, these are not lenses through which only the patient views the world; they will affect how any health-care professional perceives their own and their patients' health beliefs and behaviours.

Another theme seems to be the importance of not making assumptions: always be curious and respectfully questioning of the patient's explanation for his/her condition. Not easy in a short consultation, perhaps, but vital in working with the patient to make an agreed, informed management plan.

While primarily aimed at doctors, I think this would be a useful book for undergraduates and qualified staff in many fields of medicine and its allied professions.

*Sarah Helps, South London and Maudsley NHS Trust*

## Key Topics in Ophthalmology (2nd edn)

Edited by RH Taylor, P Shah,  
PI Murray, A Burdon  
Bios Scientific Publishers 2001  
Price £27.99. Pp 373  
ISBN 1859961789

This book is aimed at ophthalmologists in training especially, according to the authors, those preparing for final exams.

My first impression was that the book was a little overwhelming. Unlike many

ophthalmology texts there are no glossy photographs to illustrate each disease and although this was done deliberately it does make the content look very dense and unappetizing. However, once I had got over this, the book turned out to be organized into very manageable topics.

Topics are arranged alphabetically, making it perfect to have on hand for a quick review of conditions you are not sure about. Each topic contains a detailed summary of the background, clinical features and management of the condition and, unlike similar books, the pathogenesis is also explained. Each chapter is also cross-referenced to other chapters of interest. The orthoptic-related topics, often overlooked in other texts, are covered superbly.

One of its more negative points is that some topics are quite intense and assume a certain degree of knowledge, especially the neuro-ophthalmology sections. However, should you wish to go into more depth, the book is also well referenced.

This book is definitely not for those without a serious interest in ophthalmology. Although better suited to those in the later stages of training, I would recommend this book to those starting out in ophthalmology as well, as I believe it has a lot to offer. It provides not only advice on condition management but also an understanding of the disease process, although in the beginning you may want to use a picture book as well. This book is well worth carrying around, so don't let first impressions put you off.

*Fiona Lyon, Lincoln County Hospital*

## Correction

The review of *The Hospital Autopsy* (2nd edn) in the August 2002 issue of *Hospital Medicine* was incorrectly credited to Dr Emyr W Benbow, University of Manchester. The review was written by Dr Lorna J McWilliam from Manchester Royal Infirmary. We would like to apologise for any confusion or embarrassment caused.