

Medical Information on the Internet: A guide for health professionals (3rd edn)

Robert Kiley

Churchill Livingstone 2003

Price £21.99. Pp 185

ISBN 0443072159

This is a new edition of Robert Kiley's guide to the Internet for health professionals. Aimed at novice and veteran alike, the book contains detailed and clear information on getting connected and staying up-to-date with medical advances and the associated literature. This is the third edition to have come out, reflecting not just developments since the last edition in 1999, but also the success and popularity this book has generated. There are new sections that cover searching medical



databases such as Medline and Cochrane effectively, as well as a section on getting connected that covers broadband access and protecting your computer from hackers and viruses.

The book is well-written, concise and littered with practical instructions and illustrations of how the internet can be of use to health professionals in their day-to-day work. While the rate of growth of the internet continues at an exponential rate, there will always be a market for a book that can explain what information is available and how and

where to find it. I believe this latest edition provides the busy clinician with a cost-effective guide to help with searching the web quickly and efficiently.

Richard Lau, St. George's Hospital, London

Lecture Notes on Dermatology (8th edn)

Robin Graham-Brown, Tony Burns

Blackwell Publishing 2002

Price £16.95. Pp 194

ISBN 0632056943

This is a pocket book that achieves a lot – a concise introduction to dermatology containing enough detail to make it a useful handbook for students and postgraduates alike.

First published in 1965, and now in its 8th edition, it remains up-to-date with disease aetiology and management. The style is relatively informal with personal anecdotes scattered through to enliven the text, reference tables of important points (useful for exam revision) and many excellent (and a few poor) colour photographs illustrating clinical features. Starting with an introduction to the structure and function of the skin and appendages, moving to a brief outline of how to make a diagnosis with a sensible synopsis of investigations, it moves into chapters devoted to skin conditions. Systemic disorders are amply covered.

With a chapter each on skin and the psyche, pruritus and drug reactions, difficult areas of dermatology are adequately discussed. On the negative side, the last chapter on treatment is devoted to principles of topical therapy and would be better placed after chapter 2 – the diagnosis of dermatological disease.

More specific disease-related treatments are all mentioned in the relevant chapters but in general principle terms rather than as didactic treatment recommendations, making this less useful as a treatment manual than it should be.

This is an excellent small textbook of dermatology, useful as an adjunct to formal dermatology teaching and for those trying to teach themselves. The easy to use layout and photographs make it useful for 'spot' diagnoses too.

Elizabeth JC Stewart, Leigh Infirmary

Practical Emergency Medicine

Edited by Ian Greaves and

Graham Johnson

Arnold 2002

Price £39.99. Pp 582

ISBN 0340806192

Emergency medicine is a rapidly developing specialist field and a number of texts deal with the broad range of presentations. This book aims to provide practical support for junior doctors working in the field. It covers the spectrum of clinical practice in a brief and standard manner predominantly using text and occasionally highlighted tables for key information.

It attempts to cover the breadth needed to be comprehensive while still retaining features making it convenient for easy access and use by junior staff in the department. It is well structured in ten separate areas from pre-hospital

care through the range of presenting problems. The book starts with an excellent overview of good basic principles for successful emergency practice.

However, attempting to deal with the breadth of practice while aiming to keep a manageable sized text is ambitious and in some ways it fails to adequately provide the detail that some would like. Some junior doctors within the department used the book in their day-to-day management, and felt that this book would be helpful before commencing an emergency department position but once in post it did not provide sufficient information to assist in making clinical management decisions.

Some suggestions of changes to the style of the book included colour images as well as flow diagrams to help the decision-making process. Equally those involved in clinical emergency medicine are all too often aware of the inconsistencies of clinical presentation and the use of clinical cases to help emphasize practical clinical management would also be beneficial.

Overall *Practical Emergency Medicine* is a useful text to have available as a resource in any emergency department. It is a text that junior doctors will use but could find more helpful with greater guidance and I'm sure this will develop in future editions.

Peter K Thompson, King's College Hospital, London