

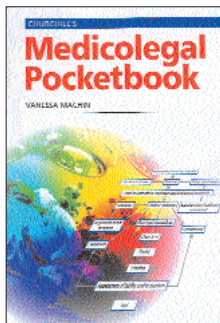
Churchill's Medicolegal Pocketbook

Vanessa Machin
Churchill Livingstone 2003
Price £17.99. Pp 252
ISBN 0443071330

Medical law has established itself as an autonomous discipline over the last 20 years, and health-care professionals are increasingly expected to understand the relevant law in their areas of practice.

The book starts with a short guide to the British legal system, defining the origins of the law, the hierarchy of the courts, and the principles of legal procedure. This is a useful section and provides clear explanations of relevant legal terminology.

The subsequent chapters give practical advice from preparation of police statements, appearing in court and collection of forensic samples to consent, confidentiality, clinical governance, handling complaints and clinical negligence. The legal aspects of death, organ donation, euthanasia, withdrawal of treatment and advance directives are clearly summarized. The



final chapters cover child abuse, the Mental Health Act and the law relating to alcohol and drugs.

The layout is good. Each chapter starts with a clear contents list and includes highlighted key points and quick reference tables for the practitioner at work. There are also some useful flowcharts for the management of various situations, for example, handling of complaints or advance directives. The potential impact of the Human Rights Act 1998 on the practice of medicine was barely mentioned, which was surprising in view of its recent incorporation into UK law. A short section on its implications for medicine would have been useful although largely theoretical.

This pocket-sized book contains a considerable amount of useful information. It does not attempt to address each subject in detail but provides the user with a handy reference, giving clear, practical guidance through a broad spectrum of legal dilemmas. This would benefit health-care professionals of all grades and background in this increasingly litigious era.

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Accident and Emergency: Diagnosis and Management (4th edn)

Anthony FT Brown
Arnold 2002
Price £18.99. Pp 442
ISBN 0340807202

Anyone can attend an accident and emergency (A&E) department at any time with any problem in any condition. Patients may be very young or very old, sober or not, cooperative or not, and have a clearly identifiable problem or present a diagnostic and/or management dilemma. Brown has revised his excellent handbook with clear, up-to-date information and the fourth edition testifies to the success of previous ones. He offers easy-to-read, practical and succinct guidance to A&E doctors, primarily senior house officers.

The text is condition- rather than symptom-based, but each section has a similar format, focusing on history, examination, investigation and initial management. The language is clear, the advice straightforward, and the scope comprehensive. The new edition has added sections, updated terminology and includes elements of evidence-based medicine and clinical governance.

The drug infusion table in the appendix and the various formulae are helpful.

There are a few items that I would like to see included in the next edition: 20% dextrose for hypoglycaemia, tissue adhesives, cervical spine obliques in trauma and a blood gas nomogram, but these are refinements. The book is a handy UK-orientated reference well designed for its target audience, and would also be useful for medical students, emergency nurse practitioners and GPs. Brown's book should be an essential part of the A&E 'shop-floor' library. I can see myself sneaking a look at it in the future.

Ed Glucksman, King's College Hospital, London

ABC of Clinical Haematology (2nd edn)

Edited by Drew Provan
BMJ Publishing Group 2003
Price £17.95. Pp 75
ISBN 0727916769

Derived from the stand-alone articles in the *British Medical Journal*, the ABC textbooks offer a series of short reviews of specific clinical areas.

The *ABC of Clinical Haematology* is no exception. Now in its second edition it contains 15 chapters each of which

covers a broad area of haematological practice. Every chapter is clearly presented with images and tables that are accurate and useful. Some of the photographs are a bit dated and the blood film images would benefit from being larger but this book is not an image atlas for the haematologist. There is a clear functional index but the lack of cross referencing between chapters, presumably a throwback of the book's stand alone article origin, is disappointing.

The review style of each chapter makes them easy to read and tables draw out salient points in an 'at a glance' style. At the end of each section is a further reading list.

The chapter on haematological emergencies is particularly valuable, dealing with several of the more common acute problems such as spinal cord compression, neutropenic sepsis and sickle cell crises. Each is clearly and logically approached and will be of value to anyone in accident and emergency.

This book is of value to every doctor and medical student. It will provide most with all the day-to-day haematological information they are likely to need.

James Bailey, South Glasgow University Hospitals NHS Trust