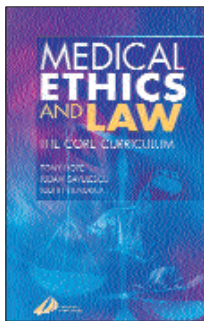


Medical Ethics and Law: the core curriculum

Tony Hope, Julian Savulescu, Judith Hendrick
Churchill Livingstone 2003
Price £14.99. Pp 222
ISBN 0443062552

Medical ethics is now a significant part of the curriculum for all medical students. This book is also targeted at 'all those who want a readily accessible account of the major ethical and legal issues raised by clinical practice'. As a physician who had no formal undergraduate training in ethical or legal matters it was generally easy to follow, although some of the legal argument and philosophy needed more than one reading.

The book provides a useful analysis of issues which will be relevant to most clinicians, e.g. consent, confidentiality and end of life. Topics of more interest to specific groups of health-care professionals such as genetics, reproductive medicine, children and mental health are covered. There are chapters on resource allocation and research for managers and academics respectively. Difficult issues are well illustrated



with examples, often cases which have attracted media interest. For the practising clinician there will be a strong temptation to omit the section on the ethical and legal background and jump straight to key areas of concern, but this should be resisted.

The early chapters help to emphasize and understand why individuals from diverse backgrounds can have a very different view of the same issue. The book is written from the western perspective; broadening it to include the viewpoint of other religious and ethnic groups would have been helpful.

The liberal use of boxes often provide useful summaries or bring out key concepts, but sometimes break up the flow of the text, which can be irritating when a chapter is read in detail.

At £14.99 the book is excellent value and few practitioners would not find it both informative and enlightening. I recommend it both as an overview, but also a useful first reference resource. For occasions when more depth is needed there are references to more detailed texts at the end of each chapter and a section on web resources.

MW Elliott, St James's University Hospital, Leeds

Cardiovascular Emergencies

Edited by Crispin Davies and Yaver Bashir
BMJ Publishing Group 2003
Price £35.00. Pp 408
ISBN 0 7279 1484 7

There are a number of texts on cardiac emergencies. This book bridges the gap between a reference text and a hands-on guide. It is a practical and easily read book that is suitable for dipping into during a free moment and elegantly combines evidence-based practice with the authors' own experience. Summary boxes and clinical cases to highlight the key points support each chapter.

The acute coronary syndromes are discussed in detail and make up a substantial amount of the first part of the book. The chapters are clear and concise in their discussion and incorporate the pathophysiological principles underlying new therapies.

Although well illustrated a number of typographical errors occur in the otherwise excellent diagrams that help the reader to differentiate between the different re-entry tachycardias.

The section on practical procedures provides valuable advice on a number

of procedures. I would have liked a little more on non-invasive and invasive methods of assessing cardiac output. An appendix of coronary care unit (CCU) drug protocols is a useful inclusion.

This book spans district and tertiary centre cardiology but also contains valuable information for the generalist. It should be in all coronary and intensive care units and should be read by senior house officers and specialist registrars in cardiology, general, emergency and intensive care medicine alike. I will be buying a copy for our CCU.

Richard Mansfield, Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust

The Menopause in Practice

Catrina Bain, Mary Ann Lumsden, Naveed Sattar, Ian A Greer
RSM Press 2002
Price £14.95. Pp 71
ISBN 1853155160

The Menopause in Practice summarizes current issues relating to management of the menopause. It contains the care pathway adapted from the British Menopause Society, which is useful.

The first chapter gives an historical overview of the menopause through the

ages. A particularly useful feature is the 'key point' boxes, which are more likely to stick in the memory than large blocks of text. The management advice is sensible and balanced (and reassuringly mirrored my own for the most part).

The most important feature of this book is the continued reference to the Women's Health Initiative paper, published mid 2002. This reflects previously unknown data on the long-term use of continuous combined hormone replacement therapy, its risks and benefits. A new edition might be indicated as further long-term data become available.

Some of the figures could be clearer and the photographs better quality. This might increase the price, although it is expensive at £14.95 for a book of 70 pages. Future versions must include a chapter on complementary medicine, as this is often poorly understood by doctors, but frequently asked about.

The book is very readable and avoids unnecessary use of medical jargon. It includes enough information for menopause clinic nursing or medical staff to give balanced advice to patients.
Andrew Drakeley, Liverpool Women's Hospital