

## Saunders' Pocket Essentials of Clinical Medicine (3rd edn)

Anne Ballinger, Stephen Patchett

WB Saunders 2003

Price £18.99. Pages 864

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**PDA version** Price £18.99 ISBN 0 7020 27278

This year, Elsevier earned over \$1.5 billion in sales from its online journals ([www.onlinepublishingnews.com/htm/n20030221.150669.htm](http://www.onlinepublishingnews.com/htm/n20030221.150669.htm)). As most librarians will tell you, part of the reason is a hike in subscription charges. It is a pleasant surprise, then, to see how they have priced this title. £18.99 is a fair price for such a colourful paper book, and £18.99 for the electronic version is extremely fair when all other major medical publishers charge over \$60. The combined price of £29.99 means that Elsevier are to be commended for serving their customers so well.



The content is excellent. It is a pocket version of Kumar and Clark's *Clinical Medicine*, making it a serious competitor for other textbooks. It is appropriate for medical students studying for exams and hospital specialists referring to information from other specialities. The text is impressively detailed and exam-oriented, including a question and answer session that is ideal for on-the-go revision.

The electronic version has medical calculators and rapid access to the medical emergencies section. The CD is designed for use on PCs, Palm-compatibles and Pocket PCs, but it works with almost any handheld device.

What are the faults? The emergencies section is a little light (especially the management of chest pain); the navigation takes a little getting used to, and the initial setup is cumbersome. All in all, however, an excellent text, excellently produced.

*Mohammad Al-Ubaydli, National Center of Biotechnology Information, Bethesda, USA*

## Psychology for the MRCPsych (2nd edn)

Marcus Munafò

Arnold 2002

Price £18.99. Pp 198

ISBN 0340809116

The MRCPsych exam has always placed a strong emphasis on psychology and trainees are expected to have a comprehensive understanding of the subject. This book is intended to give psychiatric trainees a practical guide to psychological topics relevant to the membership exam. In this edition the multiple choice question (MCQ) paper 'stem' questions technique have been replaced by individual statements, which has prompted inclusion of a large number of MCQs rewritten to conform to the new format.

The book is essentially a reference aid and hence the contents of some chapters are sketchy, while others are well covered. The book is divided into two sections; the first includes chapters on basic and social psychology, neuropsychology and psychological assessment. The second section covers human development. All chapters have a series of MCQs and answers.

The neuropsychology chapter has been broadened, according to the author. However, this chapter consists of short essays on memory, language, perception

and visuospatial ability, and was too brief to be relevant to trainee psychiatrists. There is only a fleeting reference to frontal lobe deficit, and assessment by standard tests which trainees are expected to know (e.g. the Wisconsin Card Sorting Test) is not included.

Each chapter has clear headings and the use of bullet points makes the book easy to read. The layout is succinct and information is conveyed simply. The author has aimed for a broad coverage rather than attention to detail. It is the type of book psychiatric trainees will want to get their hands on a few weeks before an examination.

As with all books of this nature a great deal of understanding of the subject has to be in place before cursory revision of the topic means anything. On the positive side it is well referenced and the many MCQs will help some trainees. On the negative side the standard of individual chapters is uneven and there is a curious omission of a reasonable synopsis of cognitive therapy. The book does not purport to be a comprehensive review of psychological theories, but will serve as a useful aid for psychiatric trainees. I suspect it will find a place on the library shelf.

*Francis J Dunne, North East London Mental Health NHS Trust*

## Shaw's Textbook of Operative Gynaecology

Christopher N Hudson,

Marcus E Setchell, John Howkins

Churchill Livingstone 2001

Price £45.00. Pp 413

ISBN 817042 1691

Since its last edition was published in 1983, there have been many changes to the content and scope of this book. It provides an easy-to-read, logical overview of all aspects of gynaecological surgery. There are excellent anatomical and surgical diagrams to compliment the text, which contains appropriate detail without being over-referenced.

As gynaecology becomes more subspecialized, it is impossible for a text of this nature to detail all procedures in-depth. However, many recent advances in minimal access surgery, surgery for incontinence, and oncological procedures are covered in sufficient detail.

Although writing up operative cases is no longer required for gynaecological training, all trainees in gynaecological surgery would benefit from use of this text. This book would be a useful addition to any trainee's bookshelf as it covers many procedures, which will be seen occasionally during training, if at all.

*Angus Thomson, Liverpool Women's Hospital*