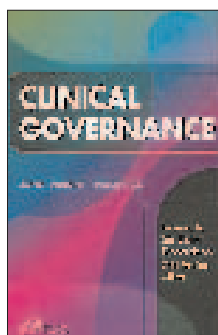


Clinical Governance

John Wright and Peter Hill
Churchill Livingstone 2003
Price £19.99. Pp 228
ISBN 0443071268

John Wright and Peter Hill's book is a timely review of the key values and activities underpinning the NHS's efforts to develop and implement quality assurance. Written 5 years after the publication of *A First Class Service: Quality in the New NHS*, the authors cover the breadth and vision introduced to the NHS through the concept of clinical governance.

Starting with a historical perspective of governance, the book places a range of quality initiatives – many of which are not new – within the conceptual framework of clinical governance, giving them a coherence and direction which, as isolated activities, they have lacked in the past. The review is comprehensive, covering organizational activities such as clinical effectiveness, clinical audit and changing clinical practice. Critically, it also considers the behaviours that individuals need to support effective outcomes, including teamwork, leadership and lifelong



learning. The differences and similarities between hospital and general practice are noted, hence the book is relevant to health-care professionals across the primary–secondary care interface. Although the text is referenced throughout, more up-to-date references in some areas could have been used. While the text is, in the main, easy to read, it occasionally becomes overly didactic and pedantic.

In addition to its breadth, this book offers a great deal of practical advice for individual health-care practitioners and managers through a series of case studies and vignettes. These liven up the text but also make real the issues within health care for patients and staff. They help to keep the book focussed on the whole point of clinical governance – improving health care for patients.

In his introduction to this book Sir Liam Donaldson suggests that it should be widely read. I would support this recommendation since this is a book which, for its clarity, practical advice and common sense, makes clinical governance accessible to all those interested in improving health for patients.

Shelley Heard, London Deanery, London

Pocket Consultant Cardiology (5th edn)

RH Swanton
Blackwell Publishing Company 2003
Price £29.50. Pp 460
ISBN 1405101970

The previous editions of this book have been extremely popular with those interested in the management of cardiac patients and are recognized as valuable, practical and concise. This new edition incorporates important new evidence in a clear and accessible format. The chapters on coronary artery disease, heart failure, endocarditis and pacing have been updated.

The clear strength of this book lies in the wealth of clinical experience of the author. This comes through in each chapter and leads to a perceptive, concise analysis of each subject. A potentially complex subject, congenital heart disease, is made accessible and easy to follow. The figures have been well designed such that diagrams convey important useful clinical messages.

Clinical cardiology is now informed by a vast evidence base, which continues to evolve. Dr Swanton has managed to incorporate relevant key data

while still maintaining a fluid and readable style. The major trials are referenced and useful further reading and websites are included.

As a practicing cardiologist this superb book was a pleasure to read. The subject is made accessible and stimulating. I am sure that this book will continue to prove extremely popular with doctors at all levels, nurses and cardiac scientific officers.

Nick Robinson, St Bartholomew's Hospital, London

Drugs in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care (3rd edn)

Martin Sasada and Susan Smith
Oxford University Press 2003
Price £19.95. Pp 412
ISBN 019856164

First published in 1990, the original purpose of this compact little text was to provide readers with detailed pharmacological data on the drugs most commonly used within the specialty, and to help prepare juniors for the FRCA examination. The goals 13 years on remain unchanged.

Divided into nearly 200, two-page chapters, each covering one drug and

with a standardized format, both basic clinical topics and advanced pharmacological data are described. The uses of each drug are listed both in an anaesthetic context and otherwise, and the preparations, modes and mechanisms of action, doses, and systemic effects and toxicity are all addressed. The latter section of each chapter discusses the kinetics for every drug; this information gives the reader greater insight into drug effects.

The choice of drugs included is broad, and covers specialist areas of anaesthesia, as well as intensive and high-dependency care. The text is easy to read, and accessible to readers of all levels. The layout of the text is clear, and user-friendly, although having two indexes, one for drug names and one for medical uses, is slightly tedious.

This is an excellent companion for those who prescribe drugs in an anaesthetic context. It does not offer clinical information about the conditions being treated, but this does not detract from the overall appeal of this data-packed, pocket-sized text.

James S Dawson, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham