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BOOK REVIEWS

ABC of Urology. C Dawson, H Whitfield, Eds. BMJ Publishing Group, 1997. £14.95. Pp vii + 46. Illustrated. ISBN No. 0-7279-1075-2.

This attractively presented and well illustrated book of 43 pages long can only act as a brief "taster" for urology. The inevitable stand alone nature of each chapter which allowed it to sit well between the pages of the BMJ make for some unfortunate repetition in such a short book. Some major subjects such as renal colic and bladder outlet obstruction are dispersed over three chapters reducing the books usefulness for easy reference. The depth of coverage is generally good but a bit variable; including endocrinology and apoptosis under a discussion of prostate cancer, but excluding any mention of intermittent self catheterisation or even the use of catheters in general.

The fact that urology has moved on since the articles were written is, I think, reflected in the space given to laser prostatectomy with no mention being made of the cheaper low tech electro vaporisation of the prostate which at present is threatening to displace laser ablation as a possible day case procedure in the treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia.

The book is aimed primarily at primary health care teams but there would seem little to justify the claim on the back cover that it emphasises "the new approach to shared care using the skills of the primary care team in conjunction with hospital referral". I could only find one short paragraph in the book relating to shared care, however, I do not think that it is any worse off because of this. Despite its shortcomings, which I believe are principally due to the transfer of format, I like this book for its succinctness and readability; but then it should be eminently readable given such a dynamic and evolving speciality.

P W KUTARSKI

Advanced Paediatric Life Support: The Practical Approach. 2nd Edn. BMJ Publishing Group, 1997. £22.95. Pp vii + 306. Illustrated. ISBN No: 0-7279-1069-8.

The second edition of this book is an improved version of the previous edition and it deals with the practical management of an ill child, both clinically and scientifically.

There are around 300 pages, including 26 chapters and 7 appendices, written under 6 parts. The introductory first part projects that the child is not a small adult and physiological requirements are different. This chapter also discusses the ways to recognise a sick child. The second chapter discusses in detail about basic life support in a step-by-step manner, again stressing the importance of ABC of resuscitation and how to institute the basic principles. The following chapters deal in detail with advanced management of commonly seen paediatric emergencies such as cardiac arrest, shock, seizures and the various respiratory emergencies such as severe croup,

epiglottitis and severe asthma. The general assessment and management of poisoning are very well written, and are easy to understand and follow.

Part 4 discusses the management of the seriously injured child, discussing in detail regional injuries and their management. The chapter on the management of head trauma is well written, very easy to follow and should help to improve the standard care of head injuries which are usually not well managed initially in the small peripheral hospitals. A chapter is totally dedicated to the practical procedures which include airways maintenance and secure access for maintenance of circulation. It also has a useful chapter on paediatric radiology for non-radiologists and the transportation of sick children to a specialized hospital for further treatment. The concluding part has a series of appendices full of useful clinical and scientific information on Acid Base balance and fluid and electrolyte management in children. They have also provided useful appendices for paediatric formulary and pain management in children for easy reference.

In short, the second version is an improvement on the initial edition of this booklet and should be available for easy reference where a sick child is cared for, such as an accident and emergency department, a childrens' ward and paediatric and neonatal intensive care unit.

B MOORTGHE

The Evidence Based Medicine Workbook. Critical appraisal for clinical problem solving. RA Dixon, JF Munro, PB Silcocks. Butterworth-Heinemann, 1997. £16.99. Pp viii + 212. Illustrated. ISBN No. 0-7506-2590-2.

Evidence-based medicine (EBM) is a system for identifying and applying the best available research evidence so as to improve clinical decision-making. EBM considers the randomised controlled trial to provide by far the best evidence of true clinical efficacy, and stresses the value of systematic reviews of trials as a means of resolving areas of continuing clinical uncertainty.

EBM was pioneered at McMaster University in Canada in the early 1980s. Aided by the revolution in medical informatics and by growing concerns about the need for cost effectiveness in health care, it has now spread to almost all medical specialties throughout the developed world, where it is profoundly influencing research policy and clinical practice. In Britain the chief exponents of EBM currently are the UK Cochrane Collaboration, based in Oxford and the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, in York.

This book originates from the Public Health Medicine department at Sheffield University, and appears to comprise the course material of a critical appraisal workshop run by that department. It is not easy to read straight through, since it requires the careful analysis of nine separate research papers drawn from across the medical literature, and the answering of detailed questions

on the scientific value of each paper. It will appeal to the EBM enthusiast, but the novice is better advised to look first at a more readable text, such as David Sackett's "Evidence Based Medicine" (Churchill Livingstone 1997), or Iain Chalmers' "Systematic Reviews" (BMJ Publishing Group 1995).

AMJ CROFT

Prevention and Control of Pain in Children - A Manual for Health Care Professionals. BMJ Publishing Group, 1997. £18.00 Pp vii+ 116. ISBN No: 0-7279-1178-3.

Children, especially neonates, are normally undertreated due to the belief that children do not feel pain as do adults. It is also considered that children become addicted to analgesics and develop side effects more frequently than adults, hence their under usage. This booklet, which spans over 100 pages, was devised by a Workshop sponsored by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. The contributors include Paediatricians, Paediatric Surgeons, Paediatric Specialist Nurses, Pharmacists, Paediatric Anaesthetists and a Clinical Psychologist. The first two chapters, are general and discuss the concept of pain control, the pain control team and the assessment of pain

in children by the QUESTT approach. A long chapter is devoted to methods of pain control, including the use of drugs such as opioid and non-opioid analgesics. It also discusses in detail the use of locally applied medication and non-pharmacological methods more useful in the paediatric population as compared to adults. There are three long chapters dedicated to the management of pain in the neonate in an intensive care unit, pain management of a child in a paediatric intensive care unit and the management of pain in children receiving terminal care. The support to the family of a child receiving pain treatment during long term intensive care and terminal care is also discussed adequately in appropriate chapters.

This book also provides easy reference with regard to the doses and side effects of the commonly used analgesics.

In short, this book provides a useful aid to management of pain in children, both with regards to prevention and control, and should be available for easy reference in A&E Departments, Children's Wards, Paediatric and Neonatal Intensive Care Units.

B MOORTHY

OBITUARIES

Regimental Headquarters would welcome self-written obituaries and when completed they should be forwarded to Regimental Secretary RHQ, RAMC, Keogh Barracks, Ash Vale, Aldershot, Hants GU12 5RQ.