

Books received

Clinical biostatistics. An introduction to evidence-based medicine, G Dunn, B Everitt. pp vi+154, illustrated. Edward Arnold, London, 1995. £10.99, paperback

The textbook of total quality in health-care, AF Al-Assaf, JA Schmele, eds. pp ix+301, illustrated. Kogan Page, London, 1995. £35.00, hardback

Performance management and appraisal in health services, M Edis. pp 160, illustrated. Kogan Page, London, 1995. £12.95, paperback

The healthcare management handbook, K Holdaway, ed. pp xxvii+323, illustrated. Kogan Page, London, 1995. £18.95, paperback

The treatment of epilepsy, S Shorvon, F Dreifuss, D Fish, D Thomas, eds. pp xiv+835, illustrated. Blackwell Science, Oxford, 1996. £99.50, hardback

Otoscopy. A structured approach, PJ Wormald, GG Browning. pp 93, illustrated. Arnold, London, 1996. £29.50, paperback

Introduction to minimal access surgery, TH Brown, MH Irving, eds. pp xii+85, illustrated. BMJ, London, 1996. £29.95, paperback

ABC of brainstem death, 2nd edn, C Pallis, DH Harley, pp ix+52, illustrated. BMJ, London, 1996. £10.95, paperback

ABC of sexually transmitted diseases, 3rd edn, MW Adler, ed. pp 80, illustrated. BMJ, London, 1996. £13.95, paperback

Clinical problems in gastroenterology, JM Rhodes, HH Tsai. pp xi+307, illustrated. Mosby Wolfe, London, 1995. £29.95, paperback

Logic in medicine, 2nd edn. CI Phillips, ed. pp x+219, illustrated. BMJ, London, 1995. £14.95, paperback

Diabetes in Europe, R Williams, L Papoz, J Fuller, eds. pp vi+215. John Libbey, London, 1994. Hardback

Book reviews

Breast disease

ABC of breast diseases, JM Dixon, ed. pp 74, illustrated. BMJ, London, 1995, £12.95, paperback.

The management of breast disease is a constantly changing field surrounded by confusion and controversy. The *ABC of breast diseases* is, therefore, welcome. It provides an authoritative and easily read summary of the diagnosis and management of the full range of commonly encountered breast problems, and also gives useful insights into the theoretical background of the modern approach to these problems. It is written by a multidisciplinary group, all of whom are involved in breast disease on a day-to-day basis and are recognised as experts in the field. Most of the statements in the book are evidence based. It is a pity that the format does not allow for the references which contain the evidence to be quoted so that readers could form their own conclusions, but that might defeat the purpose of the book.

The presentation is excellent and the illustrations are of a very high quality as would be expected from a book in the ABC series. It can be read from cover to cover to give an overall grasp of current thinking. Just as importantly, the format allows for rapid reference to specific topics for immediate information.

While I do not agree with every statement in the book, I would recommend it for anyone who is not a specialist in breast disease but encounters cases of breast disease in clinical practice.

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Nuclear medicine

Nuclear medicine: science and safety, AC Perkins. pp x+182, illustrated. John Libbey, London, 1995. £24.00, hardback

Nuclear medicine: science and safety, written by AC Perkins, an experienced medical physicist, is intended as 'a source of reference concerning the nature and safety of nuclear medicine procedures... for medical, paramedical nursing and technical staff in nuclear medicine departments'.

The book starts with a clear and simple description of ionizing radiation and goes on to discuss the potential risk associated with such radiation, comparing this with the risk in everyday activities. There follows an informative review of the history of nuclear medicine, and a succinct analysis of the materials and equipment required to provide an up-to-date nuclear medicine service. The clinical role of such a service is highlighted with a necessarily brief account of some of the investigations and therapies currently available.

Radiation dosimetry, information for staff and patients, and radiation management in nuclear medicine are all dealt with in a clear and precise manner which is easy to follow. The author concludes with appendices on physical data on radionuclides, nuclear medicine safety data and information leaflets for staff and patients, and a useful glossary of terms. The only negative aspect of this book is the mislabelling of several tables and figures; fortunately, these errors are easily spotted by the initiated and do not detract from the overall excellence of the text.

In summary, I highly recommend this book to anybody involved in nuclear medicine or in the care of patients undergoing nuclear medicine procedures, both as a basic textbook and as a reference book. The author admirably succeeds in his intention 'to improve the general knowledge and understanding of the specialty of nuclear medicine'.

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Analgesia

Patient controlled analgesia, E Welchew, pp viii+133, illustrated. BMJ, London, 1995, £16.95, paperback

The books in the *Principles and practice* series are affordable, in-depth and easy to read, and *Patient controlled analgesia* is no exception, being comprehensive in its content and light to carry around. The method of summarising key information in boxes is excellent for those readers who do not wish to plough through the text, while the summaries make the preparation of teaching material very easy. The chapters on patient outcome, safety and clinical problems focus on the critical issues of the technique, and have a good bibliography for additional reading.

I would have preferred a different organisation of the chapters. Respiratory depression and sedation should have come at the beginning, while the types of devices and how they work would have been best reserved for the end. This material is more reference than core material.

The chapter on organisation of a patient-controlled analgesia service and obtaining funding are essential reading for nurses or doctors planning a service. The book is an excellent buy for any personal or departmental library.

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