
BOOK REVIEWS

Detroit Receiving Hospital Emergency Medicine Handbook. Edited by W A Berk. (Pp 204; \$10.95.) Michigan: Plymouth Press, 1995. ISBN 1-882663-01-2.

The stated aim of the Detroit Receiving Hospital Emergency Medicine Handbook is to present in a friendly format that information which is most frequently used, but not memorised, by emergency physicians. First inspection reveals an attractively presented, well written, pocket sized reference text. It is easy to use and has certainly proved reasonably popular in the USA, where it is now into its third edition and rivals the "Pocket Manual of Emergency Medical Therapy" by Roth and Weaver. Whether it will also sell in the UK, as the publisher hopes, is rather doubtful.

More than half of the book, in fact the first 110 of its 200 pages, details drug indications, doses and costs (in dollars). This information is available to UK doctors in more familiar form in the BNF and Alder Hey Book of Children's Doses. Similarly, the information provided in the pages on toxicology is available in greater

detail to most UK A&E staff through telephone and computer links to various poisons centres.

The remainder of the book comprises useful and interesting protocols, charts, and formulae. These include charts of expected peak flows, basic (but all too easily forgotten) neurological anatomy, and isolation strategies/contagious periods for infectious diseases. Once again, unfortunately, some of this information (for example, the "immunisation schedule") is not applicable in the UK. The churlish traditionalist would no doubt be further irritated about American spellings complicating the use of the index and would advise against buying the book. Considered from another point of view, however, this book can be thoroughly recommended for any UK doctor planning to work in emergency medicine in the USA!

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Children and Toxic Fungi: The Essential Medical Guide to Fungal Poisoning in Children. By R Watling. (Pp 54; £10.00.) Edinburgh: Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, 1995. ISBN 1-872291.

Children have a habit of putting anything and everything into their mouths. It is not unusual for a child to eat or taste mushrooms and other fungi that they have

found in a garden or park. Parents are not usually knowledgeable about these plants and very often bring the child to casualty with the remains of a half chewed plant. In the hospital staff are equally foxed by what the child has swallowed. This new little book (21 cm × 14 cm, and 54 pages long) is a very helpful guide for trying to discover firstly, what the fungus is and secondly, whether it is poisonous or not. It goes further to suggest treatment and gives references, both general technical and medical. The pages are glossy and the type well laid out. In particular the colour photographs are very clear and there are beautifully clear, linear drawings of single gills and spores to help identify the plant. We are urged to look for these gills and spores under a microscope, either dry or in water, or 10% aqueous ammoniacal solution.

The book does not try to cover all fungi, but focuses on the common ones, which are likely to be found and sampled by children. Towards the beginning of the book, there is a clear algorithm based on symptomatology for fungi. Towards the end there are poison unit phone numbers and a useful glossary of some of the botanical terms that have been used. The index is clear and comprehensive.

I like this book. It is clear, suitably comprehensive, easy to use, and undauntingly short. I think it a useful addition to any A&E department library.

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