BOOK REVIEWS


Critical care medicine is one of those areas of clinical practice which develops so rapidly that many standard tomes are virtually out of date before they are published. There was always a need for regular reviews of recent advances and there are several to choose from.

Current topics in intensive care 2 is the second annual edition of a series which aims to provide authoritative reviews of controversial or developing areas in the field of critical care medicine. Although written with the practising intensivist in mind the book will interest A&E trainees involved in research related to applied physiology and seniors with an interest in critical care.

This is a multi-author book which includes contributions from leading international authorities including Professors Wolfgang Dick and Paul Pepe who regularly publish in the emergency medicine literature. A wide range of diverse topics is addressed and an immense amount of detail has been crammed into these 11 chapters. The book is very heavily referenced there are almost 1000 in the 290 page volume. Continuity of style has been preserved by careful editing by the principal author.

The first edition included two chapters from the A&E/ICU interface, on developments in intracranial pressure monitoring and investigation of the head injured patient, and post cardiac resuscitation. Topics of interest to A&E specialists in the current addition are chapter 1 on pre-hospital care, and chapter 4 on the initial management of the poisoned patient. The latter includes a useful table of common toxodermes and a critical review of gastrointestinal decontamination techniques. I particularly liked chapter 7, which is a comprehensive and up to date review of nutritional support in the intensive care unit.

There is much useful information in this impressive book. Even among the more esoteric topics there is something to learn for anyone whose last involvement with general pathology or molecular biology was more than five years ago.

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An important goal of accident and emergency medicine is to sustain and enhance dialogue and interaction between scientists and clinicians in order to promote a sound research base for the specialty. The topic of CNS responses to trauma patients represents an excellent example of integrated research involving multiple disciplines and a parallel growth of basic research and clinical studies.

Trauma, even when restricted to a single specific site, has effects influencing almost every homeostatic function and body system. This is the first volume in this series to look in depth at the way the brain responds to trauma and subsequently integrates and influences behavioural, metabolic, neurohormonal, cardiovascular, and immune functions. The authors are all international authorities in their field and drawn from the United Kingdom, continental Europe and North America. There is a strong Mancunian input and the names of Stoner, Little, and Karkkoff from the North West Injury Research Centre will be well known to most within our specialty. The topics which have been selected by the editors in this first volume represent the diversity of response of the CNS to trauma. Each chapter discusses established and recent data from experimental and clinical studies and considers the implications of these findings for the treatment and outcomes of trauma patients. The authors’ clarity and style have resulted in the book achieving two major objectives. Firstly it provides the reader with a basis for the more effective understanding and clinical management of trauma patients, and secondly it acts as a catalyst for future research endeavour. The content of each chapter is extremely well supported by a comprehensive and up to date bibliography and provides an invaluable source of further material.

This book is strongly recommended and would complement a departmental library in an accident and emergency department promoting an active interest in trauma research. There is plenty scope for further study of this subject and the results should lead to a considerable improvement in our ability to treat injured patients.

DAVID J STEEDMAN
Edinburgh


This book is a compact, ring bound rapid reference to emergency medicine. The wealth of information contained in its 572 pages is designed to be consulted rather than read from cover to cover. Most chapters offer a differential diagnosis of the common symptoms presenting to an accident and emergency departments, followed by more details on the presentation, investigation, and treatment of specific conditions. Separate chapters deal with specific topics such as environmental emergencies and poisoning. A comprehensive index and cross referencing ensures that additional information present elsewhere in the book is not missed. Text is predominant with few diagrams and no illustrations.