
This is a North American textbook of nearly 1500 pages structured around, and addressing, the core content for emergency medicine of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

Its principal aims are to provide a structured study text for trainees preparing for their higher examination, to provide a departmental reference to assist in acute management, to provide a resource for preparation of instruction material for medical students and junior staff, and to provide a list of key references to allow greater study. In all of these aims I believe it achieves its purpose well. It does this despite its layout.

It is very heavy on text and short on diagrams, flow charts, or indeed anything to interrupt the columns of text. As such it will not suit all learning styles, indeed it will probably only suit a minority of them. Of its expressed aims, therefore, I think that it is least successful as a study text.

The layout is not so problematic if the book is being used for a quick review of an individual subject or as a resource for preparation of teaching material. Despite this criticism of its layout, and while it certainly is a burdensome study tool, its content is overall very good although, understandably, North American in orientation. Each subsection of each chapter follows a similar consistent layout and each subsection is followed by the key references. The European literature is well represented in these reference lists.

My initial impression, based on the layout, was not favourable but in use I have come to value the text and commend it as a text that meets its own expressed aims, outlined above.

It is best as a quick review text and for preparation of teaching material but despite my reservations about its style I would recommend it to any trainee studying for the Edinburgh Part B in Accident & Emergency or indeed for the FPAEM exit examination.

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