BOOK REVIEWS

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Paediatric Surgery (2nd edn)

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ROBERT WHEELER

EXTENT P/H	584 p, hardback
PRICE/ISBN	£125.00 0340809108
PUBLISHER	Hodder Arnold (London), 2005
REVIEWER	Rick Turnock
STAR RATING	****

This is the second edition of a well-respected and popular textbook. The editors establish their primary aim in the preface – to provide trainees in paediatric surgery with a textbook that will cover their requirements for both training and preparation for specialist examinations such as the UK intercollegiate and Australasian fellowships. This aim is achieved.

The opening section deals with ‘General Principles of Care’, ranging from chapters on the congenital causes of disease, general basic sciences and related specialties such as paediatric anaesthesia and radiology. In addition, this section covers increasingly important contemporary topics including the ‘Child and Law’, and ‘Communication Skills’.

Thereafter, the breakdown follows the standard subspecialty areas of paediatric surgery but the book also very wisely includes a section on the ‘General Surgery of Infancy and Childhood’, which will immediately broaden this book’s appeal to the general surgeon who operates on children and to the many other professionals involved in the care of children with surgical conditions.

Reflecting the target audience’s requirements, each chapter is prefaced with learning objectives. The basic sciences relevant to the clinical subject are included and most chapters finish with clinical scenarios. While these features are to be highly commended, the clinical scenarios, in particular, might be usefully extended into clinical management algorithms, which would enable senior trainees to develop the powers of higher order thinking that are key to success in the modern style ‘exit’ FRCS examination.

Criticisms are few. The colour plates are grouped together in the centre of the book, no doubt in an effort to contain costs. However, this does reduce their pertinence to the related text. In addition, the spectrum of illustrations seemed slightly disparate, including a page devoted to the stages of healing burns, which in most centres are the responsibility of plastic rather than paediatric surgeons.

A reasonably comprehensive appraisal of the recent literature is not included in many chapters and longer reference lists would be helpful.

The index appears comprehensive but some anomalies are present. For instance, cystic hygroma (lymphangioma) is included in two separate sections, which take diametrically opposed approaches to the treatment of these rare tumours.

Furthermore, one of the sections is not even indexed. In a slightly similar vein, my specialist registrar who co-wrote the excellent chapter on congenital diaphragmatic hernia was delighted to discover that she had suddenly received a chair!

These relatively minor quibbles aside, this book can be highly recommended for the target audience and others such as the general surgeon who operates on children, paediatricians and other healthcare professionals involved in the care of children with surgical conditions.

Atlas of Diagnostic Endoscopy

MOHAMMAD IBRARULLAH

EXTENT P/H	194 p, hardback
PRICE/ISBN	£75.00 0340905816
PUBLISHER	Hodder Arnold (London), 2005
REVIEWER	David Grimes
STAR RATING	**

This book is a collection of endoscopic photographs. The overall quality is reasonable but not up to the standard of other books and the detail is not what one would expect from real-time endoscopy images.

The collection is fairly comprehensive and is dealt with in a reasonably systematic fashion. There are a few radiological images for comparison, sometimes a photograph of a resected specimen but there is no histology. There is a small amount of text associated with each series of up to six photographs.

The book appears to be aimed at young doctors who are embarking upon endoscopy training and it is suggested that the atlas might be a reference book for them. The idea is that they could match the photographs against their own endoscopic findings. I am, however, very doubtful if this is a realistic proposition as, in practice, the doctor at an early stage of training in endoscopy would be supervised by an experienced endoscopist who would help with the interpretation of the findings.

I would anticipate that the value of the book would be a quick surveillance of the images in an informal setting by a doctor or nurse new to an endoscopy department. I cannot imagine it being helpful to anyone other than the very early novice. It is a fairly dull book and it could have been set out in a more entertaining manner with short clinical details followed by a quiz-style presentation. It is, however, merely a series of images and the opportunity has been missed to add a strong and important clinical correlation.

The book is set out reasonably well with up to six images per page in a format close to A4 size. I would regard the value of the book as being for browsing purposes in an endoscopy department rather than a reference tool.