BOOK REVIEWS

Management of the child with a serious infection or severe malnutrition : Guidelines for care at the first referred level in developing countries. Geneva, World Health Organisation, 2000, pages 162 Price : Swiss francs -15.

This is a manual that supports the Integrated Management of Childhood illness (IMCI). It is meant for use by doctors, nurses and other senior health workers. The manual provides resource material for common childhood illness and strategy for treating children in both inpatient and outpatient departments in small hospitals having basic laboratory facilities and essential drugs. Many countries have adopted the IMCI strategy and once India adopts it, this manual becomes a must for all health care providers.

The manual has various chapters describing the process right from the admission of a sick child, prioritization of care, assessment of the child and dealing with specific common diseases like ARI, diarrhoea, malnutrition etc. It also deals with supportive care and

has appendices giving information on practical procedures, drug dosages etc.

There is one drawback in the manual, that, it does not cover the early neonatal period when neonatal and infant mortality is quite high. However, many WHO publications have been incorporated to give useful information for common illnesses with appropriate illustrations.

The manual is recommended for all those caring for children at the first referral level in developing countries like India.

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Textbook of Medical Biochemistry by Brig MN Chatterjea (Retd) and Dr Rana Shinde : 4th edition. Published by Jaypee Brothers, New Delhi in 2000. Paper back with 775 pages, Rs 400, ISBN 81-7179-782-2. The principal author of the book, Brig MN Chatterjea (Retd) is no stranger to readers of MJAFI. He is a former Professor and Head of the Department of Biochemistry, Armed Forces Medical College and a very experienced teacher.

This book is very popular with undergraduate students for the last seven years, since its first edition saw the light of the day. But in the present fourth edition, there is a sea change as compared to the first edition. The get up and presentation is refreshing with important informations given in coloured blocks. In the beginning of each chapter, "major concepts" and "specific objectives" are highlighted so that the undergraduates know what to study and emphasise in the vast ocean of knowledge. At the end of all 42 chapters, questions and answers are also given.

The new version keeps the general format and illustrations of the earlier text but has added many new topics like atherosclerosis, obesity, toxic substances in food, environmental pollution etc., as per latest MCI syllabus. This makes the book fully equipped for the

present day need of students. This is an easy readable text, which presents its information in a fashion that is readily accessible to both teachers and students.

It may be said that the authors have been successful to a large extent in presenting a complete and comprehensive textbook of Medical Biochemistry as per today's need. But the volume of the edition has become very big, considering the fact that the duration of MBBS is only one year now. Therefore, not all undergraduate students will find the book interesting from the examination point of view. The quality of paper and the binding need improvement. Despite these shortcomings, this book has major strengths and the students, clinical chemists and other laboratory professionals should find this a very useful, detailed and invaluable text.

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