

BOOK REVIEWS

Neonatal Formulary. Drug use in pregnancy and the first year of life.

Edmund Hey (Editor).

Fifth edition. Blackwell Publishing/British Medical Journal (BMJ) Publishing. 2007.

ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-4517-6 £39.50

The challenge to any new neonatal formulary is to provide not only current and accurate prescribing information but to provide information critical to the care of the newborn or premature infant that is not available in the British National Formulary for Children. The new fifth edition of the Neonatal Formulary rises to this challenge. I have found this book to be an excellent resource in the past and I am glad to say that the fifth edition does not disappoint.

The book has a very accessible format with drug/therapeutic information presented in monographs in alphabetical order. The monographs provide a brief and up to date resume of the proposed mechanism of action, pharmacokinetics and physiology. Current treatment controversies are reviewed with clear reference to the literature and relevant Cochrane reviews. Dosing regimes are concisely presented and differentiate between the premature and more mature infants making this particularly helpful to anyone prescribing for the preterm infant. Whilst the book focuses on an extensive range of drugs used in neonatology it doesn't neglect immunisations, blood products and foetal therapy. The final section on maternal medication and the baby endeavours to provide a useful clinical conclusion on breast feeding where extensive data is lacking.

Some of the topics I have had frequent recourse to in the past have been the monographs for Milrinone and corticosteroids with their many regimes and indications, which have been updated with the inclusion of recent clinical trial for Milrinone. Other monographs jumped out as areas of potential clinical interest such as the monograph on Methadone and its role in treating Neonatal Narcotic Abstinence Syndrome, HIV therapies and an extensive range of anti-microbials. Perhaps disappointing, is the failure to include information on some more novel/experimental therapies such as sildenafil for pulmonary hypertension and carbamyl phosphate for hyperammonaemia, both of which are in use in tertiary centres under specialist supervision.

As before I am sure I will continue to find that this book extremely useful with its excellent monographs filling a practical niche some where between a neonatal formulary and a current update in neonatal medicine.

Dr Anne Marie Heuchan

Consultant Neonatologist
Queen Mother's Hospital,
Yorkhill Hospital, Glasgow

A Surgical Revolution: Surgery in Scotland 1837-1901.

Peter F Jones

Chippenham; Anthony Rowe, 2007

ISBN 10:0 85976 684 5 ISBN 13: 978 0 875976 684 5 Price £25.00

The author is well known to readers of the surgical literature for his surgical texts. This fascinating presentation is of a different character, and gives a very valuable and detailed account of the evolution, or as he terms it, the revolution in surgical approach in the nineteenth century.

The latter term may be the more appropriate, as having read the book, one is struck by the thought that it is unlikely that there will be another century which will bring the enormous changes in surgery comparable to those which occurred in the period under discussion. In his thorough way, Peter Jones details so many of the factors, which brought about the developments during that century. He achieves this in a very relaxed and easily readable fashion.

The three main sections of the book cover in turn the period before anaesthesia and antisepsis, the introduction of antisepsis and finally the coming of aseptic techniques. The account of the developments during the nineteenth century includes the significant events, in Europe and in North America, which assisted the global change in surgery and supplement the information given about the Scottish and wider British scenes.

Readers will, I am sure, have difficulty laying this book down once they start to read.

Professor DG Young

Emeritus Professor of Paediatric Surgery
Yorkhill Hospital, Glasgow