Book Review

Clinical Management of Poisoning and Drug Overdose, Second Edition

Haddad and Winchester (Eds.). W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia 1990 pp. 1557. \$175.00

While there are many sources of information concerning the management of poisoning and drug overdose, this book is one of the most complete, well referenced, and readable works on the subject. Though written by 142 authors with a wide range of experience and background, the editors have maintained the depth, quality and even style at a high standard. In keeping with increasing interest in environmental contamination and the increasing problems with drug abuse, 19 new chapters have been added. There are also introductory colour plates of poisonous snakes, plants and mushrooms.

The introductory chapters cover a general approach to the poisoned patient, pharmacological principles, and the role of the laboratory. The rest of this section discusses the various systems, such as cardiovascular, fluid and electrolyte, acid-base, renal, respiratory, CNS, GI and hepatic, skin, eye, perinatal and developmental as well as detoxification interactions, and operation of a Poison Control Centre.

Part II covers specific poisons. The section on Natural and Environmental Toxins includes chemical pollution, snakes, insects, plants, food poisoning and radiation. Street drugs, prescription drugs and general dependency on cigarettes and alcohol are covered in Centrally Active Agents. Miscellaneous Agents include nitrates and methaemoglobinaemia, fat-soluble vitamins, cosmetics, baby powder and super glue. The remaining sections thoroughly cover analgesics, antimicrobials and anticancer agents, heavy metals and inorganics, including alkali ingestion and battery hazards, pesticides, inhalation, air pollution and anaesthetic agents, the majority too numerous to list here.

In summary, I would recommend this book for anyone involved in treating poisoned patients, and it should be a part of the library of any department involved in such activity.

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