

BOOK REVIEWS

Manual of Clinical Problems in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.
4th Edition - Michel E. Rivlin, Rick W. Martin. £18.95.
Longman Group Ltd.

The fourth edition of this book by American authors is primarily aimed at an American audience. The foreword states that this book is invaluable to medical students, residents and physicians and I feel that this is justified since each chapter is clearly and concisely written and is well supported by a detailed reference section at the end of each chapter. Indeed, many of these references are accompanied by a brief summary of the relevant findings in a particular study. This can be very helpful if one is stimulated to further reading of any topic.

All of the major problem areas in Obstetrics and Gynaecology are covered in this book. There is an interesting section devoted to human sexuality including a good but brief chapter on rape, incest and abuse.

If one could offer some criticism it would be that some topics are covered in too concise a manner but the detailed reference section makes up for this to some extent. If one reads only the text then I feel this book should primarily be enjoyed by medical students. Some of its contents reflect the American approach to Obstetrics but it is still a useful teaching textbook for those interested in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

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Principles and Practice of Mechanical Ventilation. Edited by
Martin J. Tobin M.D. Publisher: McGraw Hill Inc., Health
Professions Division, U.S.A. Pp 1300; indexed; illustrated.
Price:

Mechanical ventilation, in all its high and low technology guises, is now an established facet of modern medicine. Many authors have written on it, but generally from a single disciplinary perspective. This magnum opus edited by Martin Tobin addresses the global topic from all perspectives. It incorporates history, basic principles, conventional and specialised techniques, monitoring and imaging, complications and pneumonia, weaning and withdrawal of ventilation. It is a tome that draws on a cosmopolitan and multidisciplinary faculty, is coherently orchestrated and easily readable. It is a major new achievement by the already-accomplished Irish-American author Martin Tobin.

Each chapter is written by a clinician acknowledged to be at the forefront of his/her particular topic. 75 contributors are used; mainly U.S.A.-based, but with 20 representing Australia, Canada, England, France, Italy and Spain. The book comprises fourteen sections, subdivided into fifty-four chapters. The historical section is well-illustrated and includes descriptions of ventilation relating to air, sea and space travel. Subsequent sections thoroughly cover the physical basis and indications for ventilation, and conventional methods of doing so. The "Alternative" section includes a concise chapter on permissive hypercapnia, even suggesting ventilator settings. The "Non-

invasive support" section includes chapters on negative-pressure ventilation, the historical rocking bed and pneumobelt, and nasal or facemask ventilation. The "Unconventional" section includes a comprehensive up-to-date review of extracorporeal membrane oxygenation and carbon dioxide removal, citing studies and references as recent as 1993. Other sections cover specific settings, physiologic effects, airway management, complications, monitoring and ICU sedation.

Transatlantic differences in practice are evident; such as the failure to mention the use of the airway bougie (modified Seldinger approach) in the chapter on management of the difficult airway, and the greater use of neuromuscular blockade in the ICU setting.

The comprehensiveness and balance of this book are impressive. The chapter on imaging recognises the major everyday importance of the CXR and more specialised imaging modalities in managing ventilated patients. Sufficient image reproduction and text exist to serve as an excellent tutorial to the non-radiologist. New technology, e.g. phosphor plate receptors and digitisation, is mentioned; but more importantly the benefit of conjoint ICU reporting/conference sessions is emphasised.

The review of nosocomial pneumonia, its aetiology, pathology, diagnosis, therapy and prevention, is exceptional and reflects the established expertise of its French authors. As with the entire text, the information is virtually up to the minute and exceptionally well-referenced.

Discontinuation of mechanical ventilation (weaning) is comprehensively addressed by the editor, Martin Tobin. The scope of this chapter reflects his long-standing interest and research in this area. However the bias towards American practice is again evident. The table on managing difficult-to-wean patients, for example, cites factors such as "inform patient of weaning plan and progress, provide motivation and reassurance, consider use of biofeedback"; whereas analgesia, treatment of infection and pulmonary oedema/left ventricular dysfunction do not merit specific mention. The advocacy of thrice-weekly formal rounds contrasts strongly with the local practice of virtually continuous review, with the emphasis placed on getting patients successfully weaned off ventilation and discharged to the ward. Lack of ICU beds in Ireland and Europe relative to the U.S.A. is undoubtedly a factor in the difference in style.

The Ethics chapter is particularly good, striking a balance between experience and an excellent synopsis of relevant legal precedent relating to withdrawal of mechanical ventilation, - or indeed any other medical intervention such as artificial nutrition or hydration. The Ethics guidelines of the American Thoracic Society are usefully included, but those of the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine are not mentioned. Of particular value is the conclusion that, despite all the recent public agonising over patient or surrogate involvement in decision-making, it is essential that consensus senior medical decision-making be recognised. If such a decision concludes that, for any given patient, a medical intervention is futile and that it should be discontinued, it is recognised that this decision should be recommended with authority and seniority to the family for acceptance. Effective and compassionate communication with relatives is emphasised, with the reminder that when practice

and communication are optimal that real problems are minimised.

Happily misspellings are few, but other howlers still persist. Examples include "left lower lung" (for lobe), and in discussing phrenic nerve palsy mentions the post-bypass perfusion of the pericardium by chilled saliva! (?? saline)

In summary, there was obviously a need for a comprehensive authoritative multidisciplinary text on this topic, which is now an everyday facet of modern medicine. This book contains masses of clinically important information that is just not available in any single discipline text. It can be unequivocally recommended for the library of any institution, department or individual dealing with mechanically ventilated patients. It is an excellent information source for exam candidates, or practitioners seeking a rapid update on any aspect of practice relating to mechanical ventilation.

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A Guide to Adult Immunisation (3rd edition). ACP Task Force on Adult Immunisation and Infectious Diseases Society of America, American College of Physicians, Philadelphia 1994. 218 pages. Price £14.95 Sterling.

This is the third edition of this useful handbook. In this edition, a chapter has been added on implementation strategies for immunisations which is a useful guide. The book is organised by type of patient and by specific vaccines thus making it user friendly.

Immunizations for healthy adults are divided into three age groups and are dealt with in one chapter. There is an interesting chapter on immunisations for special groups of patients including pregnant and breast feeding women, family member exposures, occupational groups and risk behaviours. Chapters

are also devoted to immunisations for unavoidable/accidental exposures including animal / insect bites and to immunocomprised adults including HIV infection and chronic illnesses such as renal disease including transplantation. A brief outline of immunisation for international travel including malaria chemoprophylaxis is also given.

Specific vaccines are dealt with in a separate chapter. There is an interesting section on each vaccine devoted to unresolved issues such as the duration of protection after hepatitis B vaccination. This guide advocates the use of immunoglobulins for prevention of hepatitis A as the vaccine for hepatitis A is not yet licensed in the US, a fact acknowledged in the guide. The issues with regard to immune globulins are dealt with quite thoroughly in a separate section in this chapter. The final chapter examines future trends in vaccine development. It concludes that the testing of an AIDS vaccine to ensure its safety and effectiveness would take decades.

Some recommendations of the book would differ from Irish policy. These include the recommendation of pneumococcal and influenza vaccine for all those over sixty five years of age. Similarly the recommendation that all sexually active adults have hepatitis B immunisation. The guidelines for immunisation of children outlined would differ substantially from the Irish. The BCG vaccine is not recommended routinely whereas hepatitis B immunisation is.

The size of this guide makes it easy to carry about but it may be a little expensive at £14.95 sterling. It should be of interest to hospital physicians, accident and emergency colleagues, general practitioners, occupational physicians as well as public health doctors. Appendix 1 provides a useful rapid guide to vaccinations in an adult. However most of the other appendices are not relevant to Ireland. This is a good reference book but more applicable in the US than Ireland. It should provide the impetus for us to produce a similar guide here.

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