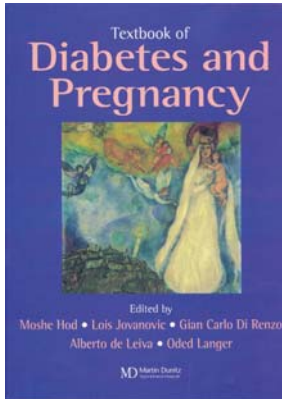


Book Review

M. Hod, L. Jovanovic, G. Carlo di Renzo, A. de Leiva, O. Langer (eds): Textbook of diabetes and pregnancy. Martin Dunitz, London, UK, 2003. 628 pp (ISBN 1 84184 110 2) Hardcover £95



This book is an excellent resource for all clinicians caring for pregnant women with diabetes. An international spread of editors and chapter authors ensures that the reader is presented with a balanced view of the controversies surrounding optimal strategies for screening, diagnosis and management.

But this book is much more than a review of current practice. It leads the reader through the history of diabetes in pregnancy and through the

basic science that helps explain the maternal and fetal morbidity and mortality encountered in diabetic pregnancy. There are chapters covering all aspects of the care of pregnant women with diabetes including a superb overview of the dietary management of gestational and Type 2 diabetes and how this requires different principles from that of the woman with Type 1 diabetes, and a chapter discussing the risk of pre-eclampsia in women with diabetes. The editors have taken a truly holistic view of the problem of diabetic pregnancy. Unlike many of its predecessors, this text covers diabetes developing after gesta-

tional diabetes and the long-term implications for the health of both the mother and the neonate. There are chapters on contraception, hormone replacement therapy and infertility, as well as on ethical, legal and health economics aspects. For such a comprehensive approach it is therefore a little surprising that the roles in the management of diabetes before, during and after pregnancy of midwives, obstetric nurses, diabetes nurse specialists and primary care physicians are not highlighted.

Each chapter lays out the evidence that has shaped our current thinking, with liberal use of tables summarising the literature and the importance of recent advances and ongoing research. Thus the book feels contemporary. The text is very readable and no clarity is lost in the pursuit of thorough coverage of each topic and in-depth discussion of all available data. Inevitably, in some sections more questions are posed than answered, reflecting ongoing uncertainty about optimal management. But here the authors draw on their own wealth of experience as well as the currently available literature and provide a pragmatic summary. Some of these may surprise some readers and include important take-home messages, for example that in uncomplicated diabetes (both gestational and pre-existing) in the absence of obstetric complications, the woman can be left to go into spontaneous labour, and that planned induction of labour and VBAC (vaginal birth after Caesarean section) carry no greater risks than in the non-diabetic. This is likely to challenge the current thinking of some practitioners. I commend this textbook to any craving a fresh look at an old problem.

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