

Manual of Newborn Care: A. Santhosh Kumar (ed)

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Ramesh Agarwal

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Neonatology has been one of the older subspecialties of Pediatrics in India. Besides the fact that newborn health is key to child survival, the longer lifespan of neonatology in the country has stimulated academicians to come up with a variety of teaching learning resources.

The second edition of the Manual of Newborn Care is an impressive attempt by Dr A Santhosh Kumar. He rightly claims in the preface that there are plenty of books that are heavy on “ponderous prose” but lack in content that helps a clinician to manage a baby. This manual which is handy and concise, but still very comprehensive one covers a range of issues related to neonatal care. The outstanding and most remarkable feature of the manual is high quality illustrations covering a variety of conditions that actually reflects the meticulous work and extensive clinical engagement of the author. The multicolored printing adds to the charm of the book.

The manual has five sections, which includes basic issues such as resuscitation, syndromic approach to common clinical presentations to neonatal ICUs, core topics such as asphyxia, sepsis, additional topics related to conditions that one does encounter in neonatal practice, and perinatal issues. The perinatal section deals with maternal and environmental factors that can influence fetus and neonates. The manual provides a useful section on

common drugs used in neonates. The index is detailed and helps locate the intended text.

The author has presented the information in such a manner that the user would find it handy whether he wants to be guided in a clinical situation related to sick neonate or learn information related to a specific disease condition. The algorithms are helpful and provide a ready reference to clinicians. The language is easy and flows well and makes the book pleasant reading. The clinical ‘tips’ are nice.

As it is true for any book, there are some issues which may need improvement. The book can use more evidence base to make recommendation for clinical practice e.g. it is perhaps not required to give antibiotics in all asphyxiated babies, newer classification and thresholds for ROP treatment must be included. The limits of pulse oximetry should not be as low as 80%. In setting up of NICU, I think 6 bedded ICU for a hospital with 5000 deliveries per year would be too small. Handwashing steps have omitted one step. In procedure section there is undue emphasis on outdated and potential harmful procedures (femoral venipuncture), while missing out important day to day procedures (IV line insertion and fixation). All in all, this is a useful resource and I would recommend the book to postgraduates and clinicians caring for neonates.

R. Agarwal (✉)

Division of Neonatology, Department of Pediatrics, WHO CC for Training and Research & ICMR Centre for Advanced Research in Newborn Health, Newborn Health Knowledge Centre (NHKC), All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi 110029, India
e-mail: ra.aiims@gmail.com