

BOOK REVIEWS

Opinions on recent titles

Title: ABC of sexual health
Author: John Tomlinson
Publisher: BMJ Books
ISBN: 0-7279-1373-5
Cost: £14.95
Reviewed by: Judy Murty, MB BS, MFFP
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This publication is a compendium of the ABC series from the *BMJ*. It covers all aspects of sexual health from the basic physiology of men and women to the therapy of sexual problems. There is a chapter on how to take a sexual history and how to approach the subject without embarrassment, and information on variations in sexual practice. For those whose speciality is involved in sexual health, the book brings together all the problem areas involved with sex in one publication for easy reference. Initially the papers needed warnings about the explicit nature of the illustrations on the cover of the *BMJ*, but when viewed in the context of the publication they enhance rather than detract from the points discussed.

Title: Making clinical governance work for you
Author: Ruth Chambers, Gill Wakley
Publisher: Radcliffe Medical Press
ISBN: 1-85775-4131
Cost: £19.95 (226 pp)
Reviewed by: Michael L Cox, FRCOG, MFFP
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In his foreword David Haslam admits that the term 'clinical governance' is likely to be as unwelcome as 'audit' was. Nevertheless, we must deal with it as best we can. The preface says the book is for those employed in general practice or community trusts; however, a great deal is also relevant to hospital trusts.

Clinical governance appears to include many traditional activities such as audit, research, education and continuing professional development, which have sometimes been conducted in a haphazard way, or even neglected. There is now an attempt to make a determined and systematic effort to improve the provision of health care through all those activities. This book helps. It is rightly described as a workbook rather than a textbook; it shows the way with many practical examples and illustrations.

The success of this endeavour will depend a great deal on team leaders of whatever level and kind. That is where this book is likely to have its principle usefulness. It is unlikely that most busy clinicians will want to plough through 266 pages, but those who lead would benefit from doing so.

The preface claims the material is available on www.primarycareonline.co.uk, but I could only find a description of the book at that site.

Title: Condoms
Editor: Adrian Mindel
Publisher: BMJ Books
ISBN: 0-7279-1267-4
Cost: £19.95
Reviewed by: John McEwan, FRCGP, FFFP
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This is a compote of chapters by different experts in all aspects of condoms: history, manufacture, their use by various groups and for various reasons. It is a fascinating account with something of interest for, and for further educating, any of us. It is aimed at clinicians and service providers, but there is much there for the informed general reader too.

Being a collection, writing styles vary, although most chapters are a good read. There is some overlap; no bad thing for a book to be 'dipped into' in a free moment.

Interestingly, the subject and this book explores, as few others do, those crossovers and blurred boundaries between contraception and the STD work we call 'sexual health'. Using the plentiful material in this book, the teacher or regular lecturer can find helpful tables, figures and loads of references or further reading lists that will take students well into sexual health topics in all areas of knowledge.

Although the heart of the book comes from New South Wales, the scope of studies quoted is world-wide, with a refreshing emphasis on people of the developing world and their need for help against the background of variable and often indifferent funding from many of the donor nations.