

ARTICLE/BOOK REVIEWS

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Book Reviews

Female Reproductive Health. N Manassiev and MI Whitehead. New York, NY: Parthenon Publishing Group, 2003. ISBN: 1 85070 491 0. Price: £55.00. Pages: 195 (hardback)

This is a concise and very readable textbook on a range of female reproductive health topics divided into nine chapters. The authors are mainly from the UK, making the book relevant to a UK audience.

Chapter 1 describes the anatomy and physiology of the female reproductive system. Chapters 2 and 3 (hormones in reproduction and the female reproductive cycle), although interesting to read, could perhaps have been shortened or combined to allow more time for exploring the clinical aspects of female reproductive health.

In this slim book the chapter on contraception is surprisingly comprehensive. Unfortunately there are some discrepancies between statements in this text and guidelines developed by the Clinical Effectiveness Unit of the Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care. There is no reference to the evidence-based recommendations of the WHO *Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use*.

Chapter 5 provides a very good overview on infertility and its management. However, sperm survival in the female genital tract is usually quoted as up to 7 days, rather than the 28-48 hours stated in this book.

Chapter 6 is a good summary of the menopause and its management with relevant study results on risks and benefits of hormone replacement therapy (HRT). It is, however, virtually impossible to provide a truly up-to-date picture in this area. The section on pharmacological and 'alternative' treatment options could perhaps have been expanded to include topical oestrogens, progestogen-only therapies and could have also discussed the role

of the Mirena® intrauterine system as the progestogen component of HRT. Furthermore, it would have been helpful to include practical referral guidelines for bone densitometry.

Chapter 7 provides a concise overview of genitourinary medicine and the up-to-date management of common sexually and non-sexually transmitted infections. Chapter 8 is dedicated to breast disorders and screening, making some very informative reading. The final chapter deals with normal and disturbed sexual function and gives a good introduction to sexual medicine.

On balance I think this is a well presented and useful reference text aimed at trainees and health professionals working in reproductive health settings, gynaecology and general practice.

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Yen and Jaffe's Reproductive Endocrinology: Physiology, Pathophysiology, and Clinical Management (5th edn). JF Strauss III and RL Barbieri (eds). Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier Saunders, 2004. ISBN: 0 7216 9546 9. Price: £117.00. Pages 1042 (hardback)

Yen and Jaffe's Reproductive Endocrinology is a textbook that comprehensively covers both basic science and clinical management of reproductive medicine.

The book is divided into three sections. The first of these describes normal reproductive physiology. Although very detailed, this section is written in a manner which is easy to follow, while a generous number of diagrams and illustrations make the text easy to understand. At the end of each chapter the clinical relevance of the subject dealt with is discussed, with an overview of common abnormalities and their management. Throughout the book references are up to date and comprehensive.

The second section focuses on the

pathophysiology and management of reproductive problems. The chapter on male fertility covers all the important aspects of pathophysiology, diagnosis and treatment, and while being detailed is easy to follow. As this textbook is published in the USA, several aspects of clinical management differ from normal UK practice. In particular the recommended investigations for male factor subfertility include tests that are no longer commonly used in UK practice. A comment on the limited clinical relevance of some of the research-orientated tests described might give the reader a more realistic idea of current clinical practice. Other chapters in this section are also well written and up to date; for example, discussing the use of metformin in polycystic ovarian syndrome and the evidence for increased breast cancer risk with hormone replacement therapy.

The third section of the book deals with reproductive technology, including *in vitro* fertilisation (IVF) and cytogenetics. Once more the chapter dealing with IVF treatment is well written, but reflects North American rather than UK clinical practice. Investigations that are not used in this country are described in detail, and the description of embryo transfer involves higher numbers of replaced embryos than currently permitted by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority. This might be confusing for readers with limited clinical experience of IVF practice in the UK. The chapter briefly touches on the ethical, emotional and social aspects of IVF treatment, areas that are overlooked by many authors.

In summary, this book is a comprehensive, up-to-date and detailed work that is aimed at those with a special interest in reproductive medicine. It is a little too detailed for the generalist except for reference use. In some cases the clinical management suggested differs from national UK guidelines.

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