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BOOK REVIEW

Integrated Contraceptive and Sexual Health Care: A Practical Guide. S Bekaert, A White. Oxford, UK: Radcliffe Publishing, 2006. ISBN: 1-85775-723-8. Price: £21.95. Pages: 226 (paperback)

This book has been written for nurses with the express purpose of serving the needs of integrated sexual health services and is divided into two sections: sexual health and contraception. It contains a comprehensive, if superficial, coverage of clinical guidelines for symptom management, examinations and treatment protocols and contraceptive methods. It is a book of lists, with much information laid out in bullet point format. It suffers from a dearth of background detail, and the reference list at the end of each chapter seems sparse in

some places for a book of this nature.

The book is inconsistent in its presentation of information. While it explains in clear language the rationale behind questions asked in both contraceptive and sexual health history taking, instructions for taking combined oral contraceptives are written out in sentence format with unnecessary reference to previous, now unused, pill guidelines. At times it reads like a nursing text from the 1960s with instructions on how to carry out a vulval toilet.

The book does not serve fully the needs of specialists or learners in either branch of sexual or contraceptive health. The chapter on 'Further Supporting Information' covers reproductive anatomy, the menstrual cycle and international pill equivalents, which is illustrative of the inconsistency of detail contained in the book

and makes it hard to judge who it is aimed at: the student nurse on placement, the post-registration student or the experienced practitioner.

The book has a task-oriented, procedural focus, making it potentially useful as a clinic handbook, and contains useful contraceptive information for nurses who come from a background of genitourinary medicine (GUM) and similar pointers for family planning nurses inexperienced in GUM. However, I would not recommend this book for nurses studying either family planning or GUM modules.

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