

women  $\leq 8$  weeks' gestation. However, a recent study in Sweden has shown that there is no significant difference in women's acceptability of home abortion or the safety of this approach at  $< 7$  weeks compared to gestations between 7 and 9 weeks.<sup>17</sup> In the light of these findings, and our growing experience of this type of service delivery, we see no reason why EMD should not be offered to women up to 9 weeks' gestation.

Given the findings of our pilot survey, we believe that it will be important in the future to conduct a large trial to compare outcomes between hospital-based treatment with EMD abortion. Outcomes of such a trial would include patient satisfaction, complication rates, readmission rates and an economic analysis. Such a trial should also incorporate qualitative research to further explore and compare women's experiences of EMD and hospital-based medical abortion.

## Conclusions

Permitting women to pass the final stage of an EMA at home allows women more control and privacy. It is highly acceptable to women who choose this form of treatment and allows abortion services to offer medical methods to more women, with advantages for women in terms of treatment at an earlier gestation with a lower risk of complications. It is likely that EMD will have cost savings for the abortion service and help services meet national recommendations on waiting times and gestations.

## Statements on funding and competing interests

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**Competing interests** None identified.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Doctor's Communication Handbook** (6th edn). Peter Tate. Oxford, UK: Radcliffe Publishing Ltd, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-1-84619-392-7. Price: £25.99. Pages: 192 (paperback)

This book is excellent. Perused with enjoyment both by me and my experienced GP husband, I found plenty to reflect on within my own day-to-day consultations. The content is suited both to the long-served and the novice. First published in 1994, it was meant as a handbook for the video examination part of the MRCGP. It is now so completely updated that even for those who have come across a previous edition, this sixth one is not to be missed. References are to up-to-date publications, and topics touched upon are relevant to the many varied settings of current UK primary care. The role of the Internet in the way patients consult has been well explored.

The author displays excellent communication skills as a writer! The prose flows beautifully, and is as suited to the beach, train, rain-soaked tent or bath as more formal study. The appendices at the end, as well as offering further reading (useful especially to medical teachers), also offer an insightful account of the author's own major health problems, giving a further stamp of credibility to

an already well-researched and empathic book.

Each chapter in this book has a clear, unambiguous title, with bold bullet points at the beginning, a well laid out text interspersed with pertinent cartoons, and a summary in the final paragraph. This author was one of those behind the widely used mnemonic ICE: 'Ideas, Concerns and Expectations'. He has been the convener of the RCGP examination in the past, and co-wrote the 1984 book, *The Consultation: An Approach to Learning and Teaching* (Oxford University Press). The author's cheerful, upbeat style masks skilfully the serious scholarship that underlies this handbook. Giving an analytical approach to what is the core art of medicine, this book demonstrates this as of equal value to the drier factual areas of knowledge.

Any doctor will find this book of relevance. Undergraduates will cover some of its topics such as breaking bad news, core consultations skills, offering and receiving feedback; and those doctors taking the revamped nMRCGP will find it useful for the Clinical Skills Examination.

I feel confident that every reader of this review will find this book worth acquiring and engaging to read.

Reviewed by **Grace Gibson**, MRCGP, DRCOG  
General Practitioner, Kingston-upon-Hull, UK

**Me, Myself and I: All About Sex and Puberty**. Louise A Spilbury, Mike Gordon. Hauppauge, NY, USA: Barron's Educational Series, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0-76414-508-7. Price: £6.45. Pages: 64 (paperback)

This book is a great help to anybody who is afraid or unsure about puberty or sex as it is clear, and uses language that is not too hard to understand and if it does have any complicated words they have an easier meaning in brackets next to them, as well as having a glossary and index.

The writer has included a lot of factual and scientific diagrams and good explanations of how your body works and what happens. The book is aimed at anybody from the age of 8 years upwards as it is easy enough for younger audiences to understand.

The book has a connection with the reader as it isn't too factual that it's boring. It has a lot of useful little tips about how things work and answers most of the questions people are normally afraid of asking.

Reviewed by **Hannah Rea**  
Teenage reviewer (13 years), Birmingham, UK