BOOK REVIEWS


This book is aimed at the layperson who wants information about contraception. It focuses on ‘pill’ methods of contraception but has an overview of other methods on religious and ethical issues and the law.

The chapters that focus on the combined pill and the emergency contraceptive pill are informative, and the ‘Myths or Facts’ section helps to answer many common questions. The chapter on the law gives clear information about consent and confidentiality issues. There is a good list of organisations and websites at the back of the book including Brook, Contraception Education, the FPA, R U Thinking and Teenage Health Freak.

However the language used is complex, and many long words are used, so it would take someone with good literacy to be able to read the book. The book is text only with no illustrations or cartoons, making it less appealing to a younger audience.

There are some factual errors, the most serious of which is the sentence saying condoms are more effective if used with non-oil-based lubricants. This could clearly cause confusion and even pregnancy. An IUCD is described as meaning intrauterine coil device and it is stated that an IUCD rests on the anterior wall of the cervical canal. The implant’s mode of action is said to be by thickening the mucus and thinning the lining of the womb – no mention is made of it stopping ovulation. There is inaccurate information on how to start the progestrogen-only pill and it is stated that women will bleed every month with this method.

The first paragraph in the ‘Religious and Ethical Issues’ chapter lacks grammar and this chapter proceeds to declare that ‘it is a fact that modern British girls are more promiscuous than ever before’. This is a judgmental statement that could alienate some readers, who are presumably picking up the book in order to help them be responsible about their own choices.

In conclusion, this book covers some useful topics but the inaccuracies suggest that other books may be more suitable. I’m sure that there are books out there that cover the subject matter in a more reader-friendly way.

Reviewed by Emily Gwinnell, MBChB, DFSRH Specialist in Reproductive Healthcare, NHS Foundation Trust, Kettering, UK


This book sets out with the honourable intention of providing sexually transmitted infections and their treatment. Each chapter has a section on talking to teenagers. There is advice on how alcohol impacts on decision making, information and a list of useful organisations and websites. The ‘question and answer’ format employed in the book is clear and easy to follow.

I am not, of course, suggesting that the work should have missed even one word of its coverage of cervical cancer. But differently titled and slightly differently focused, it could have addressed the issues of those women not suffering from cancer – even those who have never had a positive smear – but who need information and encouragement in order to engage with the system and keep so engaged. It could have presented the whole process of ‘prevention – test – treatment’ as a vital and reassuring component of regular female health care, rather than re-emphasising the worst, yet unlikely, outcome.

In short, I love this book. But I do hope that the fullest possible target market will not be misdirected by its cancer-focused title, and so fail to benefit from its superbly comprehensive and compassionate approach.

Reviewed by Susan Quilliam, BA, MNLP, Freelance Writer, Broadcaster and Agony Aunt, Cambridge, UK


This book, like others by the same author, is very easy to read and assimilate. It covers all the topics relevant to proper pill taking in an informative yet conversational style that clients will enjoy reading. Having said that, it is a pretty good read for professionals too, and because it is in a ‘question and answer’ format the advice is much easier to remember.

The contents are divided into four parts. The first part deals with choosing the pill for contraception and all the reasons why it is one of the best methods available. The second part deals with safety issues to consider before and after commencing pill taking. The third part deals with actual pill taking and common questions or difficulties that clients have when taking it. The final section introduces the reader to the progestogen-only pills, emergency hormonal contraception and the male pill.

This book is well written, concise and very useful for clients. Apart from minor typographical errors, the content is up to date and easy to understand. It would be useful in a clinic library where it could be used to explain pill-related problems and solutions to clients in the ‘question and answer’ format that the author uses.

Reviewed by Neelima Deshpande, MBChB, MFSRH Specialist in Reproductive Healthcare, Heart of Birmingham Teaching Primary Care Trust, Birmingham, UK

JOURNAL REVIEW WRITERS

The Journal regularly reviews articles from related publications and is looking to recruit more volunteers to compile these short reviews. For further information and/or to offer your services (at most one or twice a year) please contact the Editorial Office together with a note of any special interests and/or expertise to assist us in allocating relevant articles to individual reviewers. For further information on this role please contact the Journal Editorial Office at journal@fsrh.org.