Book Reviews

PAEDIATRIC RADIOLOGY FOR MRCPCH AND FRCR SECOND EDITION

Chris Schelvan, Annabel Copeman, Jacky Davis, Annmarie Jeanes and Jane Young. The Royal Society of Medicine Press. December 2009. Paperback 304pp. 27.50. ISBN: 978-1-85315-702-8.

This book is aimed at trainee paediatricians and radiologists preparing for membership and fellowship examinations. It is written by 4 consultant radiologists and 1 consultant paediatrician.

It opens with 8 short chapters outlining a system of image interpretation for the chest radiograph, a brief explanation of renal nuclear medicine, an example of normal fluoroscopy of the upper GI tract and lower male urinary tract, a few key points on the physics of CT and MRI with some examples of normal anatomy of the chest, abdomen and brain, a reminder of the importance of radiation protection and patient safety and a few words on the importance of non-accidental injury to both paediatricians and radiologists. This is followed by 106 radiology cases in a random order which keeps interest levels and could be used as viva practice.

The initial image for each case is allocated a single page with a short clinical history and several key questions related to pertinent imaging findings and relevant clinical associations or important facts. The majority of cases are plain radiographs, however there are also a few examples of other imaging modalities including fluoroscopy, CT, ultrasound, MRI and nuclear medicine. The answer to the questions on each case is provided on the following page with several key radiology and clinical points along with a suggested further reading section.

The images used are of good quality and cover the most important areas of paediatric imaging. The book is well laid out and well indexed. It is easy and enjoyable to read and covers a broad range of classic paediatric and neonatal diseases as well as a few rarer cases.

Although imaging is a small part of the MRCPCH examination, this book will be useful to consolidate clinical knowledge and the ‘clinical hot list’ with every case will be helpful revision in the months prior to the examination. It also provides an understanding of important radiograph findings for day to day practice which will be useful for paediatricians in training and for image interpretation on call.

The cases presented are not exhaustive but are basic examination material and should be core knowledge for radiologists in training, especially those preparing for FRCR vivas. The book is also a good summary for general radiologists who wish to have a quick refresher of the classic images of important neonatal and paediatric conditions.

Julie Yarr

GETTING INTO SPECIALTY TRAINING

Edited by PJ Smith, M Ramachandran, MA Gladman, The Royal Society of Medicine Press, 259 pages ISBN 978-1-85315-893-3, £ 18.95

This book is written for junior doctors approaching the change from Foundation Programme to Specialty Training. It gives a useful background to the changes in Specialty Training brought in by Modernising Medical Careers and the subsequent modifications that followed the Tooke report. It goes on to describe the process of application for Specialty Training and gives practical, clear, easy to read, and step by step advice on how to fill in an application form for Specialty Training.

A section on the Specialty Training Interviews gives simple, brief and helpful outlines regarding the organisation of the National Health Service and approaches that could be taken when asked questions about audit, teaching and research.

The section on Specialty-specific questions is very good and is comprised of eleven Specialty-specific chapters. Each of these chapters gives an introduction to the Specialty; followed by examples of the skills and knowledge applicants would need to consider in order to demonstrate their commitment to that Specialty when completing the application form. Each of these chapters also give examples of the type of Specialty-specific questions a candidate for appointment might face at interview and provides candidates with a structured approach that they could use to formulate their answers.

The book finishes with two chapters on what happens next after the interviews. The first of these which gives a very brief introduction to the steps a successful candidate might expect ahead after entry into Specialty Training (workplace-based assessments, postgraduate examinations and Annual Reviews of Competence Progression). The second gives sensible steps an unsuccessful candidate can take to gain employment, review their options and to re-apply as well as suggesting other options for an unsuccessful candidate outside the National Health Service.

Overall the book is very well written and easy to read and gives a comprehensive and practical guide to the type of preparation necessary for success at interviews to enter Specialty Training.

Keith Gardiner,

NATURAL STANDARD HERB AND SUPPLEMENT GUIDE: AN EVIDENCE-BASED REFERENCE

Catherine E. Ulbricht. Mosby Elsevier, Missouri, USA; 2010. Hardback. 871pp £48.99 ISBN: 978-0-323-07295-3

This reference text is a comprehensive exploration of over 360 herbs and supplements used in the treatment of a variety of clinical disorders. The
book is organized alphabetically and each herb/supplement is consistently subdivided into six sub-sectors that include related terms, background, evidence, dosing, safety and interactions. It has two appendices and full contents and index sections to help the reader quickly and efficiently find desired information.

As the title indicates, this book grades the evidence in a system that ranges from A (strong scientific evidence) through F (strong negative scientific evidence), employing the Natural Standard evidence-based criteria (www.naturalstandard.com). The preface section details how the research methodology, the systematic aggregation analysis and review of the literature have been performed. No peer-reviewed references are cited in the book, but there is a link to the Natural Standard’s website, where there are comprehensive lists of peer-reviewed literature relating to each herb/supplement.

Overall, this book is an excellent reference text and a good compendium of information on herbs/supplements, which duly deserves a place on your personal bookshelf.

John E. Moore

OXFORD HANDBOOK OF GENETICS

Guy Bradley-Smith Sally Hope Helen V Firth Jane A. Hurst., Oxford University Press, 494 pages, ISBN 978-0-19-954536-0 £27.95

This book is described a guide for the non-specialist and is aimed at the primary care clinician. It begins with a ten-page glossary of abbreviations that is perhaps a little off-putting but then gets down to business and starts by outlining the concept of family. I was a little surprised that they discuss adoption before consent and confidentiality but maybe this reflects the authors’ experiences of genetic enquiries in General Practice. Chapter 2 discusses genetic inheritance very clearly and chapter 3, genetic investigations. The information is very helpful but perhaps not always in what I would consider a very logical order. The bulk of the book discusses a selection of genetic disorders. These are described very clearly and give a quick overview of conditions such as myotonic dystrophy and tuberous sclerosis. The choice of conditions described in the book is perhaps a little inconsistent. There is quite a lot of information about Noonan syndrome whereas other conditions such as Prader-Willi or Williams get the briefest of mentions and my own interest, Fabry disease, is not mentioned at all. However I appreciate that it is difficult to select conditions and those that are covered, are covered very well. There is an extensive section on inherited cancers. This describes the need to take a detailed three generation pedigree. It also gives examples of the surveillance programmes recommended for at risk individuals. There is a helpful section on the interface between primary care and genetics. The authors emphasize the paramount importance of accurate diagnosis in order to provide appropriate genetic advice to the extended family. Anything that encourages referrers to provide as much information as possible to the genetics service is to be welcomed.

So is this is a useful book? Well, yes I think it is. My concern is how it will actually be used in practice. I don’t think it is a book that is intended to be read cover to cover but more to be consulted as needed. Professor Peter Farndon talks about ‘just in time ’information i.e. genetic information instantly available if one is seeing a patient with a genetic disorder. There are a lot of excellent on-line genetics resources. Would someone lift this book off the shelf and look up the information or would it be easier to hit a button on the PC and get on-line information? For those of us who still prefer our information in the printed form then I would recommend this book. If I were one of the authors I would be considering an electronic ‘App’ version of the book.

Fiona Stewart