



SURGERY FOR GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

Brian A. Maurice
Castle House, Tunbridge Wells (1989)
 257 pages. Price £15.00

Surgery for general practitioners is mandatory reading for all aspiring general practitioner surgeons. It identifies the advantages of minor surgery under local anaesthesia and lays down the minimum ideal standards under which these procedures can be safely carried out. Although a possible criticism might be the author's tendency to dogmatism in his step by step approach, I think it is an excellent framework for the aspiring surgeon. I found the book easy to read and well laid out with clear diagrams.

The early chapters contain relevant information ranging from theatre techniques and the necessary detailed consultation and record keeping to the final stage of suture removal. The techniques included in the chapter on anaesthetics must be learned although I would agree with the author that limb blockade, even with continuous electrocardiographic monitoring, is rather adventuresome and should be carried out in hospital. The book lays great emphasis on the final wound appearance and provides the necessary stitchcraft and plastic surgery tips for maximum cosmesis.

The longest chapter, on specific operations, contains sound practical surgical knowledge and pathology detailing the dangers of any over-ambitious actions in this field.

I have no hesitation in recommending this book to all general practitioners who have already succumbed to the lure of the scalpel or who intend to undertake minor surgery in the future.

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FACING PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Glynis M. Breakwell
British Psychological Society and Routledge, London (1989)
 112 pages. Price £14.95 (h/b), £5.95 (p/b)

This book in the 'Problems in practice series' examines the growing problem of physical violence towards health care and social work professionals. The subject is of great importance because of the increase, not only in incidence but also in the severity of the attacks. In part, this increase reflects changes in society, but also a tendency to care for many more mentally ill patients within the community.

The author examines the likelihood of being subjected to an

attack, and the skills necessary to prevent or deal with this. She points out that recently it has been recognized that aspects of the behaviour of health care professionals can precipitate acts of violence. She argues that, by being more able to anticipate and avoid violence, the reader will be able to exert more control by having greater professional confidence. Should all this fail, she offers sympathetic and sensitive advice to those who have been subjected to assault, and who are suffering from blame and often guilt.

The book ends with sensible and precise guidelines for the prevention and management of violence within the practice. *Facing physical violence* is directed at all members of the caring professions, and, as such, is an essential part of any practice library.

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THE SELF-HELP GUIDE

A directory of self-help organizations in the United Kingdom
Sally Knight and Robert Gann
Chapman and Hall, London (1989)
 125 pages. Price £6.95

The support, friendship and information provided by self-help organizations cannot be overemphasized. So it is good to see a new directory of these organizations, updating similar earlier guides.

Knight and Ganns' directory gives the aims, name, address, contact point and main publication of 723 self-help groups. As the authors themselves recognize, the list is not fully comprehensive, there being many thousands of such groups covering almost every imaginable condition. What is particularly useful, however, is that the authors also give contact points for organizations which hold large specialist data bases to assist people to get in touch with a local self-help group or those relevant to rare conditions.

Brief advice is also given to general practitioners on managing their own self-help organization information base, manually or on a computer. In addition there are suggestions for a starter collection of free or cheap literature from various self-help and voluntary organizations which general practitioners might assemble for patient use.

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