

has now recommended significant changes in the management of cardiopulmonary arrest but their protocol for the management of ventricular fibrillation is confusingly different from both the new and the old guidelines.

The all too brief chapters on training may be helpful to district health authority training officers and others charged with the task of setting up courses. The authors' advice is practical and includes details of course programmes, equipment, testing and certification. Some useful multiple choice question papers are provided although, of course, resuscitation skills are better assessed by practical testing on manikins.

In summary, the training chapters are useful but, as a text on the subject, the *ABC of resuscitation* edited by T R Evans (London, British Medical Journal, 1990) or the *Resuscitation handbook* by J F Baskett (London, Gower, 1989) are clearer and more up to date.

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**MANAGING FOR QUALITY IN GENERAL PRACTICE**  
**Medical audit series 2**

*Donald Irvine*

*King's Fund Centre, London (1990)*

*91 pages. Price £7.50*

Over the last two decades, general practitioners have watched in wonder as repeated reorganization of the management of hospitals and health authorities has apparently led to a steady deterioration in morale and services. On the basis of this experience it is not surprising that the news that they were themselves to be subjected to management and accountability

by the new family health services authorities was not greeted with enthusiasm. The speed with which the new contract for general practitioners was introduced and the creation of mountains of paperwork has led at times to despair and desperation, and most general practitioners develop an acute allergic response to words like audit, quality, planning and monitoring.

As one suffering from such malaise, I took the short book by Donald Irvine to read during a brief autumn holiday. Dr **Irvine does not normally compete with my favourite authors for reading on vacation, but the pressures of the new contract compelled me towards this abnormal behaviour. Within 90 pages, leaning heavily on the work of Donabedian, the author made the dreaded words above seem both comprehensible and relevant. He translated the worrying expression 'managing for quality' into a perfectly reasonable way for general practitioners to decide what they are trying to do and devise ways of measuring whether or not they achieve it. He spelt out the implications of this for medical education and indicated ways to reduce the disruptive tension and increase constructive working at the interface between the doctors and the health service authorities.**

In such a short volume the author could not be expected to resolve the difficulties of defining high quality general practitioner care; the risk of measuring those things which are measurable rather than those which are important; or identifying resources for the new developments without sacrificing time devoted to clinical care. As an antidote to the current widespread unease in the profession and a contribution to constructive discussion this work is recommended.

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