



PATIENT INFORMATION IN MEDICINE

Ronald D Mann (ed)

Parthenon Publishing, Carnforth, Lancashire (1992)

199 pages. Price £19.95

The bland title of this book belies the major importance of its contents. European Community directive 1989/341/EEC deals with the provision of information to patients about the medicines that they use, and its far reaching implications are discussed in detail by the 20 expert contributors to this report based on two separate symposia on the subject.

The average general practitioner struggling to contain the vagaries of the new general practitioner contract might find it difficult to imagine how a 200 page book can be written on the subject, but most of it is worth reading. The clinical, ethical, legal and political implications are far reaching and this is reflected in the book's multidisciplinary approach.

Patient information in medicine is informative, well written and tightly edited. Training practices should certainly purchase a copy for their library and the rest of us should try to borrow a copy.

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CERVICAL SCREENING (second edition)

Joan Austoker and Ann McPherson

Oxford University Press (1992)

64 pages. Price £5.95

This second edition of *Cervical screening* has been completely rewritten to produce a much improved book. It is designed to offer 'detailed yet practical help' to anyone in the primary care team involved in setting up and developing an effective call and recall system for cervical cytology.

Current guidelines for cervical screening and the evidence supporting these are discussed. The call and recall systems used in general practice are examined with helpful details on the identification of women, invitation to attend, follow up of non-attenders, taking cervical smears and communicating with the laboratory. The chapter on the interpretation of smear results has two tables explaining specific result codes and gives recommended courses of action for each code. Where there is no consensus, for example, in the case of 'inflammatory cells', this is stated specifically and the acceptable alternatives outlined. Later sections deal with informing patients of their results, colposcopy, treatment and follow up of treated patients. As would be ex-

pected there are tips on the importance of running a fail safe system and how to audit it.

The chapter on funding issues is interesting but does not clearly explain how target payments are calculated. I enjoyed the chapter on areas of uncertainty most of all. It was fascinating to see how in such a small book problem areas could be discussed so clearly and intelligently. The references and address lists are concise and useful.

Clearly this book is a distillation of wisdom, and it is very readable. I recommend it highly. It is a must for the practice library.

MARY PIERCE

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A CONCISE GUIDE TO THE CHILDREN ACT 1989

Richard Williams (ed)

Royal College of Psychiatrists, London (1992)

26 pages. Price £5.00

The voluminous children act has spawned many synopses but this recent addition from the Royal College of Psychiatrists has much to commend it. It provides a concise overview of the aims and scope of the act and summarizes the key concepts. The powers and duties of local authorities are clearly outlined.

The particular strength of this guide lies in its structured approach to the variety of orders created in the act. Each order is addressed in turn from the point of view of the purpose of the order; the circumstances under which the order may be sought; the powers and duties under the order, including areas in which the court may give further directions; the application of general principles, indicating how the key concepts relate to the order; who can apply for the order; the type of court(s) to which application should be made; the duration of the order; the court to which appeal should be addressed; and who can apply for a variation of the order and under what circumstances.

This practical approach works well and is particularly helpful for the majority of general practitioners who will only rarely need to refer to the guide. It is also useful for those who need to come to grips with the act rapidly for examination purposes, such as candidates for the MRCGP examination or a paediatric diploma. For these reasons I would recommend that all general practices have a copy of this book.

GEOFF ROBERTS

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