



DOMICILIARY PALLIATIVE CARE

A guide for the primary care team

Derek Doyle

Oxford University Press (1994)

149 pages. Price £22.50

General practitioners and community nurses will welcome this valuable addition to the excellent Oxford general practice series. Derek Doyle, medical director of St Columba's Hospice, Edinburgh, has combined his knowledge and skills in palliative care with his experience in general practice to produce a useful workbook for members of the primary health care team.

The style of the book is to give clear, concise advice for many of the problems encountered in caring for patients with a life-threatening illness. Pain and symptom control are the first issues to be addressed. Particular problems for the primary health care team, such as the management of neuropathic pain, breathlessness, constipation, and nausea and vomiting, are well explained with rational protocols, including drug doses, that should be adopted. There are chapters devoted to bereavement care and to issues which affect the working of the primary health care team. There is a short bibliography of some of the key texts for those who wish to explore further. The appendices contain practical help with a particularly useful section on which drugs should be carried in the doctor's bag. Emergencies in palliative care are rare, but this book gives helpful advice on how to anticipate problems and to deal with emergencies such as superior vena caval obstruction, spinal cord compression, and severe haemorrhage.

The Oxford general practice series has established an enviable reputation of excellence. I would suggest that Dr Doyle's contribution may well become the 'jewel in the crown'.

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SHARED CARE FOR PROSTATIC DISEASES

Roger Kirby, John Fitzpatrick, Michael Kirby and Andrew Fitzpatrick

ISIS Medical Media, Oxford (1994)

180 pages. Price £17.50

Shared care for prostatic diseases is comprehensive, clearly presented, beautifully illustrated, concise and most readable. The book outlines a cooperative approach between general practitioners and urologists for improved patient care in the management of prostatic diseases. Individual chapters address the concept of shared care, and the prevalence, pathogenesis and development of prostatic disease. In turn diagnosis, medical management of benign prostatic hyperplasia, specialist

management of benign prostatic hyperplasia and modern management of prostate cancer are discussed from the perspectives of both general practitioner and specialist. I particularly like the bullet point summaries and the tables which encapsulate the main points of each chapter. The book presents current guidelines which practices can utilize or adapt, developing local policies to suit local needs. The final section of the book is devoted to case studies which are considered by means of a 'discussion' between general practitioner and urologist. They are an excellent way of learning about prostatic diseases and relating the knowledge gained to practice. I believe these case studies would be an invaluable resource in teaching and training practices.

The publication of this book is timely. The development of guidelines for the provision of care of consistent quality is advocated for clinical effectiveness. Community management is appropriate because of the high prevalence of benign prostatic hyperplasia in middle aged and elderly men. A major concern for general practitioners is distinguishing those patients at risk for prostatic carcinoma from those with benign hyperplasia. The guidelines given in this book assist the general practitioner to distinguish patients who can safely be managed in the community from those who require referral for specialist investigation.

In conclusion, I recommend this book. It would be a useful addition to the practice library, both as a reference work and as a set of guidelines for patient care. In particular, teaching and training practices would find this book invaluable.

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DETECTION OF PROBLEM DRINKERS IN GENERAL PRACTICE

Michael Cornel

Thesis Publishers, Amsterdam, Netherlands (1994)

173 pages. Price US \$23.50, Df 35.00

This book consists of papers produced as part of a piece of work undertaken by the Dutch author for an MD thesis. Four of the papers are reproduced in their original form, but there are also introductory and concluding chapters, as well as a long appendix in Dutch, including copies of questionnaires and examples of other instruments.

As such it provides a detailed account of the study presented in a variety of dimensions, and there are many helpful references although unfortunately there is no index. As an account of a research exercise undertaken for an MD thesis, this is an