



MANAGING IMMUNIZATION IN GENERAL PRACTICE

Michael Ingram

Radcliff Medical Press, Oxford (1995)

112 pages. Price £14.95

Managing immunization in general practice is designed to help general practitioners to plan, provide, develop and monitor a comprehensive immunization service in their practices. This book is not a classic publication but serves as a useful reference for general practitioners to optimize their immunization procedures not only for National Health Service patients but also, if they wish, on a private basis for travellers and local companies. Michael Ingram aims to help doctors to maximize this source of income because immunization benefits the population's health at the same time.

As mentioned in the foreword by John Chisholm, immunization is one of the few preventive interventions of undoubted and proven effectiveness. The book covers the practical issues not usually dealt with in medical textbooks. It provides guidance to general practitioners on how to introduce an immunization service or at least on how to assess the immunization procedures already established in a practice. Ingram examines the management, organizational, financial, medicolegal, audit and marketing issues related to immunization provided by general practitioners in the United Kingdom. I found the chapter devoted to teamwork especially interesting; it clearly describes the task distribution between the different members of practice staff. Although the book's UK focus makes it less applicable for doctors working in other health care systems, I think the book is useful reading for general practitioners everywhere and essential reading for those in general practices in the UK.

JOAN GENÉ BADIA

General practitioner, Barcelona, Spain

THE OLDER PERSON: CONSENT AND CARE

British Medical Association and Royal College of Nursing

BMA, London (1995)

63 pages. Price £6.95 (BMA or RCN members £5.95)

Elderly people unable to understand or express choices, as a result of mental or physical incapacity, present health professionals with dilemmas and ethical problems. Elderly people can be threatened by erosion of their rights and by difficulty in asserting their rights if they are dependent.

Health professionals can find difficulty in promoting an individual's autonomy when making decisions for that patient. This raises not only the ethical principles underlying consent but also how a patient's capacity to give consent can be assessed. The problems of treating those who have retained the capacity to

express choice but do not consent to treatment and those who lack such capacity require acquaintance with the relevant sections of the mental health act 1983.

At all costs, the vulnerable person's interests must be defended, particularly in such matters as privacy and confidentiality where liaison with relatives, interpreters, citizen advocates and nominated representatives is involved. This report from a distinguished steering group of nursing consultants, advisers on medical ethics, medical specialists and general practitioners discusses these issues clearly and concisely, provides essential information, draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

Vignettes are provided throughout to illustrate specific problems relating to complaints, abuse or when confidence needs to be broken. There is a helpful glossary of terms used in this field, useful addresses, a further reading list and an index.

In our ageing population, the required knowledge set out in this report should be to hand for all team members.

M KEITH THOMPSON

*General practitioner, Croydon and lecturer,
American University of Beirut, Lebanon*

CARDIAC REHABILITATION

Dee Jones and Robert West (eds)

BMJ Publishing Group, London (1995)

264 pages. Price £29.95

This comprehensively referenced description of the evolution, provision and outcome of cardiac rehabilitation will be of interest to specialists in this field. Non-specialists, however, will find plenty of information on which to base the management of individuals; summary boxes in each chapter are particularly helpful in this respect.

Rehabilitation is not simply a matter of regaining physical fitness, and patients are often more concerned with quality of life than with mortality. Much of the book is rightly devoted to psychological aspects, concluding that cognitive therapies and relaxation training are as important as education and exercise. General practitioners are well aware that cardiac events affect all aspects of patients' lives, and will recognize the term 'homecoming depression'. It is pleasing to see a whole chapter on the role of, and consequences for, spouses of rehabilitating patients.

Secondary prevention by attention to risk factors is covered, as well as the relative merits of hospital-based and community-based programmes. Prognostic indicators that are used in risk stratification can be used to tailor programmes to individual patients.

The authors point out that elderly patients and patients with angina may also benefit from rehabilitation, and there are chapters on its use in congenital and non-coronary heart disease, and after cardiac surgery.