**Handbook of HIV Medicine**


This handbook, divided into five parts encompassing a clear Bio-Psycho-Social approach, serves as an easily referenced, tabulated and illustrated guide to HIV medicine in South Africa.

Part 1, a general introduction to HIV medicine, provides a broad overview of the emerging pandemic and reasons therefor. It emphasises aspects of HIV counselling, sex and sexuality with issues of HIV transmission and safer sex practices, in a drive to prevent further infections. Parts 2 and 3 give a hands on approach to both adult and paediatric medicine with comprehensive chapters on all the clinical problems that manifest themselves in all the specialized fields of medicine. Part 4, Drug management, gives guidelines and advice for therapeutic options for both adult and paediatric patients. This handbook clearly emphasises that with excellent adherence to triple therapy it is possible to convert HIV from a hopelessly fatal infection into a chronic and manageable illness.

The list of drugs commonly used in the management of HIV infected patients at the primary health care level is a good indicator of drugs that should be made available in both state and private sector clinics. Part 5 emphasises a patient-centred care approach. I particularly benefited from this section’s approach to health care worker burnout and developing a balance between giving and taking, between caring for others and caring for oneself.

Throughout the book references and further reading are provided with an appendix of useful resources, which will aid the practitioner to gain further in-depth information. This is an invaluable handbook at a reasonable cost, with all the authors’ royalties being donated to the South African HIV Clinicians Society.

Practically every conceivable HIV-related topic is covered, from immunology to gay sex and sexuality. Looking up these topics is simple and sufficient information is provided to cover basic management. The text is very readable and we found the colour atlas and section on ethical dilemmas to be particularly useful.

Ways of improving adherence to therapy are also dealt with rather briefly, and perhaps this important topic could receive more attention in future editions. Nevertheless as an overview for primary health care practitioners, and in fact anyone dealing with people living with HIV or AIDS in developing countries, this handbook succeeds in providing a valuable source of information which we hope will be widely read.

Although the editors state the handbook is “a readily accessible source of reference”, in reality this cannot be described as a reference book, and practitioners who require detailed information will need to look elsewhere. The authors and contributors have given a comprehensive guide to the health care professional, where health care is delivered in a diversity of settings, ranging from basic rural clinics to sophisticated private practices.

**L D Regensberg and N Hlatshwayo, Aid for AIDS (Pty) Ltd**

**Hyperlipidemia**


This issue, like other issues in the Fast Facts series, is intended to be a comprehensive and efficient source of information for busy medical practitioners. The authors draw on extensive experience and communicate information in a guided fashion so that the reader will not explore unfruitful avenues of enquiry. Paul Durrington is a clinical lipidologist who has also established himself as a researcher.

Alan Sniderman has researched the atherogenic implications of apolipoprotein B-containing lipoproteins as well as acylating stimulating protein and its involvement in fatty acid metabolism. The book is easy and quick to read. The novice will gain a good understanding and can find specific discussion on topics that need to be revisited quickly. Owing to rapid developments in lipidology, this book is not only relevant to students and general practitioners, but also to specialist physicians and cardiologists.

The efficiency of this book is already indicated by having the index of chapters on the cover page. As expected, it deals with biochemistry and physiology in a selective way to introduce the necessary background before taking the reader into a chapter that innovatively combines epidemiology and pathophysiology. After this the book deals with various disorders before going to dietary and drug management and their indications. The laboratory tests place good perspective on the diagnostic work-up and future trends are discussed briefly to prepare the reader for developments that will come into press in the near future.

The discussion of apolipoprotein B-containing lipoproteins and their role in atherogenesis is an excellent way to gain insight into the continuity of these particles from their synthesis in the gut and liver, to their secretion into the circulation and modulation by enzymes to provide energy currency to tissues as fatty acids and cholesterol for cells that require it for growth and special products. Along with more modern understanding, the metabolic activity of adipose tissue is incorporated into the scheme of lipoprotein metabolism. The discussion of small dense low density lipoprotein (LDL) is informative as well.

The epidemiology section explains the poor predictability of
atherosclerotic complications in the middle third of cholesterol concentrations of modern societies very well. It emphasises the role of low high density lipoprotein (HDL) concentrations and how these interrelate with triglycerides and small dense LDL.

The prevalence of hyperlipidemia in founder populations such as in South Africa, is stressed. Diabetes and its attendant dyslipidaemia is covered well in the chapter on secondary dyslipidaemia. Of relevance is the discussion of dyslipidaemia emerging with treatment of human immunodeficiency virus infection. The recent landmark drug trials are persuasively discussed, including the Heart Protection Study. Guidelines in North America and Europe are contrasted in the discussion on management. The more conservative view of the European guidelines is discussed and is of interest as the South African guidelines are in close agreement.

A D Marais

Scientific Writing. Easy when you know how


This book is a handy summary of how to go about writing an article for a scientific journal. Most seasoned scientific writers would be familiar with the issues that are discussed but the book is aimed at novice writers and it is nice to have all the advice and suggestions condensed in one volume.

The book starts with a chapter that encourages researchers to write by discussing the rewards for being a good writer. Good time management skills are discussed to ensure writers devote sufficient time to the writing and polishing of their papers - a novel approach for would-be writers.

Chapters 2 and 3 deal with the nitty gritty of writing by advocating the IMRAD structure (introduction, method, results, and discussion.) But they contain much more than how the paper should be planned. They deal with tricky issues such as the politics surrounding authorship of research teams and how they could be listed. A credit point system for deciding authorship is suggested in one of the highlighted/boxed examples. Data analysis, interpretation of results, the golden guidelines is discussed and is of interest as the South African guidelines are in close agreement.

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The stance of the book, however, is definitely from inside the clinic, and therefore I feel it is of less use to people such as GPs who work in other areas of medicine. There still seems to be a lack of useful books explaining GU medicine for non-specialists. Editors and writers of pocket medical guides have to struggle to retain a pocket size and weight to their book, but still make it worth carrying around. Inevitably, some will see omissions in this book, but the editors have done pretty well. I did wonder whether the addition of an all encompassing chapter on pregnancy would be helpful; th Maintaining the concise yet comprehensive style of the Oxford Handbook series, The Oxford Handbook of Genitourinary Medicine, HIV, and Sexual Health provides a wealth of detailed, evidence-based, and clinically focused information on all aspects of the discipline, from STI diagnosis and management to medico-legal issues. This Handbook is a key single reference work for healthcare professionals, sexual health specialists, trainee doctors, and nurses with an interest in the field, making it an indispensable resource to keep on hand at all times. Handbook of HIV 3e provides a concise guide to all aspects of HIV management in the context of sub-Saharan Africa. It covers a broad spectrum of topics from diagnostic and management approaches to the common manifestations of HIV in both adults and children. The handbook has been written in particular for reference in the hospital ward or clinic. Part 1: General introduction to HIV medicine 1: Epidemiology 2: Virology 3: The immune system and HIV infection 4: Interactions between HIV and tuberculosis 5: Laboratory investigations 6: HIV transmission and natural history 7: Counselling 8: Sex and sexuality 9: Preventing HIV infection: individuals and populations Part 2: Approach to HIV infection in children 10: Clinical assessment (paediatric) 11: Childhood vaccination 12: Infant.