

Book Review

Sexual Health Medicine

Darren Russell, David Bradford and Christopher Fairley (Editors)

IP Communications (2005)

494 pp, including index

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It was a pleasure to be asked to review 'Sexual Health Medicine', the first truly Australasian textbook on Sexual Health. This is also possibly the first book covering all broad aspects of 'sexual health' in the one text. Having spoken to some of the authors who had been busy preparing chapters, it was good to see the finished product. I have no doubt that the book will be a valuable and important asset in the teaching and management of sexual health problems.

The editors, Darren Russell, Christopher Fairley and David Bradford, originally hail from Melbourne, though some have recently moved to Cairns in Far North Queensland. In addition to Victoria and Queensland, there is author representation from Western Australia, Canberra, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and New South Wales. The names are well known and the editors have chosen authors who are well-respected peers and colleagues in their chosen fields.

The textbook encompasses all aspects of sexual health, and is divided into four parts, including an Introduction, Genital Syndromes and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and HIV, Reproduction Health and Sexual Function, and, lastly, STI Control.

The introduction provides an overview of genital anatomy and physiology, sexual diversity, sexual response as well as chapters on sexual history, examination, and the laboratory approach to the diagnosis of STIs.

The largest section of the book is usefully divided up into genital syndromes, including urethral symptoms, vaginal symptoms, genital ulcers, and lumps and bumps. Tropical STIs are dealt with in a separate chapter. Other presentations such as pelvic pain, ano-rectal symptoms, skin disorders, genital pain, and dysuria and prostatitis are also detailed fully in separate chapters.

Approaches to Hepatitis and HIV are comprehensively dealt with, as are the obstetric and neonatal complications of STIs. I found the chapter on genital pain in women a particularly relevant and important inclusion in the

book. This common problem is often managed poorly by practitioners and this succinct chapter makes the diagnosis and management of vulval pain easy to understand.

Reproductive health and sexual function includes chapters on contraception, pap testing, homosexuality, lesbianism, transgender health, sexual assault and common sexual problems including male erectile dysfunction. Menopause is given a chapter of its own.

The first chapter on STI control provides the reader with clear and simple explanations of the ways in which STI control can be implemented. Further chapters in this section include details of STI control in resource-poor settings, resource-rich settings, and among the sex industry. Useful chapters include partner notification and confidentiality, and the law, ethics and sex follow and conclude this useful and comprehensive textbook.

The book brings together the practice and discipline of sexual health in an informative and readable context for Australasian and International audiences. Junior medical staff in sexual health or related disciplines and nursing and counselling staff practising in the fields of reproductive and sexual health would gain much from this text as a basic introduction to the field. It is also an informative text for general practitioners, especially those who find themselves spending time dealing with reproductive and sexual health issues.

This book is easy to read, affordable, comprehensive and it can be 'dipped' in and out of. The book serves as a valuable addition to the list of available sexual health texts and I am certain that we will see further editions expanded and updated as knowledge in each field expands. Strongly recommended reading.

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