

Book Reviews

“Essentials of Pediatric Intensive Care”

*Authors: Charles stalk and Patrick Dobbs.
Publishers Greenwich Medical Media Limited
1st Edition 2004 pp 241, Price not mentioned.*

This small handbook is written as a source of easily accessible information for medical and nursing staff that may work for short time in a pediatric intensive care. It is difficult to review such loosely targeted books. These do not carry enough information because these are not textbooks and there is no definition as to how much information is enough for a handbook. It carries point wise information and has almost no explanations. In some parts it looks good but in others it can only help if one has sufficient background knowledge.

Book has three sections. First section deals with basic principles of intensive care. Some chapters included in this part like basic life support, advanced life support, and sedation and analgesia, are well written and are somewhat complete. However, others like airway and ventilation just introduce the subject and have no practical information that will equip the reader in managing patients requiring ventilatory support. Management of shock is very poorly written and only inotropes have been dealt with some details. Transport of a sick child and death in PICU are good though brief.

Second section of book deals with specific PICU problems. This section too is unimpressive even conditions like acute severe bronchial asthma, the protocols for which are now published as consensus statements, has

been poorly written. Salbuta-mol inhalation has been recommended hourly or continuously. Ipratropium is added six hourly if no response is seen to salbutamol. Other drugs are just mentioned without specifying the exact time when these should be used. Chapter on cardiac diseases does not carry any mention of congestive heart failure a very common PICU condition. None of the procedures in PICU are given in detail. Algorithms have been used in some chapters but most of the chapters would have benefited if good algorithms were in place for practical approach.

Third section of the book deals with drugs that are commonly used in critically sick children admitted in PICU. This I feel is a very good idea and is a very useful chapter for residents working in PICU. Since drugs like sedative analgesics, paralytic agents and antiarrhythmics are specific to ICU setting; it is worthwhile getting information from a handbook.

Print quality is good but font size is too small for presbyopics. Overall this book may be useful to only nursing staff and house physicians for recollecting points about different situations in a PICU. This has very little practical utility in actual management.

G.R. Sethi,

Professor,

Department of Pediatrics,

Maulana Azad Medical College,

New Delhi 110 001,

India.