

Paediatrics and Child Health. A Manual for Health Professionals in Developing Countries

5th edition. Edited by HM Coovadia and DF Wittenberg. Pp. vi + 730. Illustrated. R350. Oxford University Press. 2004. ISBN 0-19-578405-7. (Available from SAMA-HMPG. Price R350, members R320.)

This book is now firmly entrenched as the paediatrics and child health book you must have if you are a medical student in southern Africa. It is an easy book to use, the text is not pretentious and it covers very comfortably the knowledge, skills and approach required if you are a student or practitioner looking after children.

Changes to this edition include a more integrated layout which emphasises common disorders, important problems and the broad strokes of comprehensive management including prevention.

The book is firmly based on the primary care approach and problem-based learning and this makes it particularly suitable for undergraduate students. For those needing a quick reference or review for individual problems the index is thorough and the layout systematic and easy to follow. It is uniquely adapted to paediatrics and child health issues in this country but is equally applicable for use in other developing countries.

This is not a large reference textbook on paediatrics and child health and I am pleased to see that it has resisted the temptation to transform. It addresses the broad scope of child health problems in a comprehensive and integrated fashion. This edition is greatly improved without deviating from its principal aims – to provide clear information on childhood illness in a way that facilitates the primary care approach, problem solving and comprehensive care. It is very user friendly and for many it will be the first book to reach for when you need to check something in your practice.

David Beatty