

# ABC Series

## ABC of Sexually Transmitted Infections

*Fifth edition. By Michael Adler, Frances Cowan, Patrick French, Helen Mitchell and John Richens. Pp. vii + 89. Illustrated. £17.95. BMJ. 2004. ISBN 0-7279-1761-7. (Available from SAMA-HMPG. Price R295, members R265.)*

## ABC of Smoking Cessation

*Ed by John Britton. Pp. xi + 43. Illustrated. £11. Blackwell Publishing. 2004. ISBN 0-7272-18184. (Available from SAMA-HMPG. Price R245, members R220.)*

## ABC of Eyes

*Fourth edition. By PT Khaw, P Shah and AR Elkington. Pp. vii + 93. Illustrated. £13.50. BMJ Books 2004. ISBN 0-7279-1659-9. (Available from SAMA-HMPG. Price R225, members R205.)*

## ABC of Rheumatology

*Third Edition. Ed by: Michael L Snaith. Pp. viii + 125. Illustrated. £15. BMJ Books. 2004. ISBN 0-7279-1688-2. (Available from SAMA-HMPG. Price R245, members R220.)*

## ABC of Emergency Radiology

*Ed by DA Nicholson and PA Driscoll. Pp. viii + 111. Illustrated. £15. BMJ Books. 2004. ISBN 0-7279-0832-4. (Available from SAMA-HMPG. Price R245, members R220.)*

## ABC of Sexual Health

*Ed by John Tomlinson. Pp. VIII + 61. Illustrated. £15.95. BMJ Books. 1999. ISBN 0-7279-1373-5. (Available from SAMJ-HMPG. Price R275, members R250.)*

Practicality and clinical relevance in an attractive, clear and accessible format are the outstanding claims to fame of the BMJ's well-known ABC series of booklets, which are compilations of articles originally published weekly in the BMJ.

The various titles seem to be regularly updated, the *ABC of Sexually Transmitted Infections* being the 5th edition, which is thoroughly up-to-date, with considerable attention paid to different disease patterns and antibiotic sensitivities in different parts of the world. In the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) the ideal route of laboratory-confirmed diagnosis is clearly described, followed by the simpler, less precise, but effective syndromic management which, in the circumstances in which they work, is the route most doctors have to follow.

To have a whole booklet devoted to smoking cessation seems at first sight to be a bit excessive until one considers, as the authors of this excellent booklet point out, that a hypertensive smoker is likely to benefit far more from stopping smoking than from having his blood pressure well controlled.

The *ABC of Eyes* (CD-ROM included) is a succinct and up-to-date review of the field, with particular focus on the aspects of

concern in primary care and, appropriately in today's climate, with attention to pitfalls with a potentially litigious outcome. The diagrams and photographs in this booklet are of outstanding clarity.

The *ABC of Emergency Radiology* would be a boon to any doctor working in the field of accident and emergency, containing comprehensive cover of most of the problems likely to be encountered. The coupling of labelled line drawings next to the appropriate X-ray is helpful, and anyone making frequent use of this booklet would steadily improve their radiological skills.

The ABC hallmarks or succinctness and clarity, with the use of boxes and tables to emphasise points, are particularly effective in the large and rather difficult area of rheumatology. My only quibble would be the imperfect indexing, and I was disappointed in the chapters on rheumatoid arthritis.

The *ABC of Sexual Health* is excellent. It covers the sensitive area of sexual history-taking particularly well, and has chapter in homosexuality, sex aids, and sex in the disabled, and the book is sprinkled with interesting and amusing cartoons and drawings, some from antiquity.

**Jonathan Davey**