

Handbook of Trauma for Southern Africa

Edited by Andrew Nicol and Elmin Steyn. Pp. xvii + 484.

Illustrated. R275. Oxford University Press. 2004. ISBN 0-19-

578080-9. (Available from SAMA-HMPG. Price R275, members R250.)

This much-awaited pocket-size handbook will be of great value to all of us who work in the emergency environment, whether it is in the pre-hospital setting, in emergency units, or in specialised trauma units across our country.

South Africans have traditionally been regarded as having expertise in the management of trauma, due to the fact that we are exposed to a large volume of physically injured people, a significant percentage of which present with major polytrauma.

This publication contains information from a wide spectrum of contributors, demonstrating the knowledge that has been gained by both training and experience in this broad field of medicine.

Trauma surgery and emergency medicine are correctly seen as being part of the same big picture; where trauma contributes to approximately one-third of the content of emergency medicine, there will always be the need for the expertise of the specialist trauma surgeon.

Contributors to the book other than trauma surgeons include intensivists, radiologists, forensic pathologists, cardiologists, EMS practitioners, ophthalmologists, among others. There are sections on emergency procedures, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the injured child, brain death and organ donation, and trauma in the elderly.

I anticipate that the popularity of this book will demand further editions in the near future, as this field of medicine is relatively new and many are in the process of making significant contributions.

The price of R275 should not prevent every medical officer and registrar who work in emergency environments from owning a copy of this excellent publication.

Congratulations to both Andrew Nicol and Elmin Steyn.

Clive Balfour