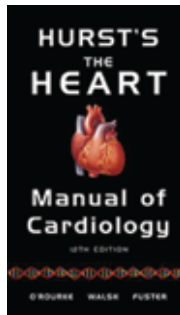


BOOK REVIEWS

Book reviews

Hurst's the heart manual of cardiology, 12th edition

Editors: O'Rourke RA, Walsh RA, Fuster V
Publisher: McGraw-Hill, 2009
ISBN: 9780071592987
Price: £43.99



Hurst's The Heart Manual of Cardiology 12th edition is a 750 page paperback that summarises the clinical sections of its bigger 2,500 page brother (*Hurst's The Heart* published December 2007, and now superseded by the 13th edition as of February 2011).

As frequent users of the bigger textbook, the most immediate advantages of the more concise manual was the size, being easy to carry around and refer to with ease at busy times. Most of the key clinical content is preserved in more concise form, as are the main within-chapter headings, with the summary of history and examination one of the best we have seen.

We also appreciate the concise explanations of pathophysiology (e.g. arrhythmogenesis), multiple explanations for a single presentation (e.g. angina), and tabulated indications, contra-indications, and compelling indications (e.g. for percutaneous coronary intervention, thrombolysis and antihypertensive agents respectively), which are often presented alongside the level of evidence available.

Heart disease in pregnancy

Authors: Adamson D, Dhanjal M, Nelson-Piercy C
Publisher: Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011
ISBN: 978-0-19-957430-8
Price: £37.95

This is another in the successful series of Oxford Specialist Handbooks in Cardiology. In keeping with their format, this book is designed as a quick reference clinical handbook rather than an academic tome. Its dimensions are designed to fit the pocket (19 x 11 cm approximately), which makes it easy to carry to the clinic, but it does mean that the font size necessitates good eyesight, and some of the graphs and illustrations are almost impossible to make out. The bullet point style is designed to summarise clinical experience and expertise rather than impart a comprehensive understanding of pathophysiology. There are no references anywhere in the book, so checking or following up any of the statements made is impossible.

The book reiterates many of the basics (for example cardiac and obstetric definitions) and quickly builds on them. This means that the book is equally accessible for the cardiologist, obstetrician or anaesthetist. The "Obstetric care for non-obstetrician" chapter is particularly useful for the cardiologist and helps ensure that all members of the multi-disciplinary team are talking the same language. For the obstetrician, the summary accounts of the various cardiac conditions (and especially the diagrams of the disordered plumbing in the various congenital lesions) are especially valuable to have at hand. The account of how to take blood pressure in pregnancy is surprisingly brief, with no mention, for example, of how to position the

References to individual trial data present in the larger Hurst's are largely omitted, an important exception being pharmacotherapy in acute coronary syndromes. Meta-analysis level and much randomised-controlled-trial data are still presented with summary plots and tables still present, a good example being trials of anticoagulation in atrial fibrillation. Summary tables of e.g. available anti-hypertensive agents and common dose ranges, or class I and IIa indications for revascularisation in chronic stable angina are helpful and quickly accessible. End of chapter references are cut down, helping the less experienced reader prioritise further reading.

We did miss some excellent chapters present in the larger textbook – that on anti-arrhythmic drugs, for instance – but this is compensated for by the keeping of the chapter on adverse cardiovascular drug interactions and complications. To summarise, we would recommend this book to not only any cardiologist, but also any postgraduate doctor who wants an effective kick-start or improvement to their understanding of cardiology, as it manages to be both quick to read or dip in to while still covering the major details.

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mother's arm, or what to do if Korotkoff 5 is indeterminate (which it is in some pregnant women – the solution is to record estimates of both Korotkoff 4 and 5 and monitor changes from these baselines).

The order of the chapters is a little unusual with the epidemiology and pre-pregnancy counselling chapters at the end.

As with any book, sections quickly become out-of-date. For example the most recent Maternal Confidential enquiry recognised Sudden Adult Death Syndrome as an increasingly common cause of maternal death and this is not mentioned. In addition, the new bromocriptine data for the treatment of peripartum cardiomyopathy are not included.

As with all clinical texts there are a few areas of controversy – such as the role of Caesarian section in the Marfan patient with a dilated aortic root. Most of these controversies are handled in a very balanced and straightforward manner.

Overall this is an excellent pocket textbook for anyone training and starting out caring for these complex, but rewarding, patients ●

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