Book reviews

Stroke, the facts
R. I. Lindley

This engaging little book is highly readable and packed with up to date information, being written by an international expert in the field. It recognises the major impact stroke has had on world political leaders as well as global incidence and prevalence, remaining a major cause of death.

In its 120 pages, it covers clearly, concisely and quite comprehensively the aspects of risk factor management, causes and pathology of stroke, recognising that ‘stroke is largely a preventable disease’, and the current state of acute stroke management, including surgical manoeuvres. It works logically through the patients’ pathway from acute event to rehabilitation and preventative strategies. The multidisciplinary chapter enlightens and answers many questions that would benefit the patients themselves.

The format is simple, well laid out with clear tables and diagrams, clinical examples and selected references in each chapter.

The target audience will include specialist stroke doctors in training, general practitioners, non-specialist medics and stroke health professionals. It would be an invaluable aid to junior doctors working on a stroke unit, and it clearly deserves a space on the bookshelf.

Diane Ames
Department of Medicine for the Elderly, St Mary’s Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 2JP, UK
Email: Diane.Ames@imperial.nhs.uk
doi: 10.1093/ageing/afp190
Published electronically 10 November 2009

Blood disorders in the elderly
Lodovico Balducci, William Ershler and Giovanni de Gaetano

This book is a valuable addition to the library of clinicians providing health care to an ageing population. Its contents span a range of haematological disorders, from anaemia to rare lymphomas, including mechanistic explanations when known.

There are five parts to the book. The first is an epidemiological overview emphasizing the diversity of the elderly population and the importance of functional reserve. The second explores the effects of ageing on the bone marrow and immune system. The third outlines investigation and treatment of anaemia affecting older persons. The fourth deals with haematological malignancies, their prognosis and treatment, with special reference to the elderly. The final section considers disorders of haemostasis and the use of antithrombotic therapy in older people.

The individual chapters are stratified, incorporating the molecular bases of the disorders, their clinical manifestations and the evidence underpinning different treatment regimens. Throughout the book, special regard is given to the goals of treatment which are individualized according to patient assessment rather than the age of the patient per se. There is much practical wisdom and interest in this comprehensive account of blood disorders in the elderly.

Gwen Sayers
Consultant Physician, London, UK
Email: sayers@medethics.co.uk
doi: 10.1093/ageing/afp191
Published electronically 4 November 2009

Understanding care homes: A research and development perspective
K. Froggatt, S. Davies, J. Meyer

This excellent book offers a sensitive insight into the practicalities of research and development in the care home sector. It eloquently demonstrates how issues relating to key concerns of quality of life and quality of care can be systematically explored. The editors’ definition of research and development is wide, but they ultimately see research knowledge being used to improve the way care is provided and to enrich the lives of people who live, work and visit there. Given this basis, there is a strong emphasis on qualitative methods and action research. Drawing on the ‘My Home Life’ programme and the work of members of the UK National Care Homes Research and Development Forum, it presents a collection of studies covering a range of
client groups including older people. It is weaker on ethical considerations including mental capacity and consent, which surprisingly are only touched on in individual chapters and do not appear in the index at all. Otherwise, in an area where the evidence base is limited, this is a welcome text to encourage future researchers and practise developers within the sector.

NICKY HAYES
King’s College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
and the Care Homes Support Team, London, UK
Email: nicky.hayes@nhs.net
doi: 10.1093/ageing/afp216