

Infection Management for Geriatrics in Long-term Care Facilities

Edited by Thomas T. Yoshikawa and Joseph G. Ouslander

New York: Marcel Dekker, 2002. 493 pp, ISBN 0-8247-0784-2. \$145.00

Thomas Yoshikawa and Joseph Ouslander are to be congratulated for editing this manageable digest on infection management in care homes. It is an unashamedly American perspective that contains much wisdom and practical advice entirely relevant to the British setting. I tested the book as a practical reference source and found that it satisfactorily addressed infection issues and uncertainties that I have recently confronted. It is now a valued addition to my library.

Infections, particularly health care-related ones, are presently subject to policy leadership from the Chief Medical Officer in the UK. This book highlights a paradox: whilst 'Getting ahead of the curve' and 'Winning ways', the key English public health documents, generally ignore infection in care homes, these pose a major challenge to public health.

The publishers may consider sending a complimentary copy to the Chief Medical Officer's team and the Commission for Health Audit and Inspection, particularly if they are reviewing standards 1 and 8 of the national service framework for older people. PCTs, their specialist interest GPs, Health Protection Agency staff as well as community geriatricians will also find this book a helpful resource.

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doi:10.1093/ageing/afh166

Acute Emergencies and Critical Care of the Geriatric Patient

Edited by Thomas T. Yoshikawa and Dean C. Norman

New York: Marcel Dekker, 2000. 520 pp, ISBN 0-8247-0345-6. \$135.00

Involvement of UK geriatricians in acute care began for pragmatic reasons. Direct admission of acute elderly patients under geriatricians was a solution to the 'problem' of elderly patients in acute wards. There was some acceptance that there may be a body of knowledge which supported the approach of geriatricians, but ultimately this was a way of pointing unwanted patients towards doctors and nurses who were prepared to look after them.

I looked at this book to see whether it successfully codified an essential body of knowledge for the acute care of elderly people. I was also looking for specific advice to help management of patients and organisation of care.

The first three chapters of this multi-authored book address Ageing Issues in the Emergency Department, Ethics in Emergency Care and Drug Dosing and Life Threatening Drug Reactions. These are a brilliant summary of

fundamental concepts, often ignored by non-geriatricians. These 47 pages alone make the book worthwhile and could be extracted as essential reading and continued guidance for doctors in all specialities working in accident and emergency departments or medical and surgical care of elderly people. The rest of the book deals comprehensively with surgical and medical emergencies. Many of the chapters have good summaries of physiological changes with age and of unique aspects in elderly people. Ideally all should include this. The chapter on the acute abdomen is particularly clear about clinical issues in elderly people. I was hoping to find some guidance on non-invasive ventilation in the chapter on respiratory failure, but this form of treatment was rather dismissed. I am not sure whether this was because the treatment is unfashionable in the USA or whether there is more experience of it than in the UK, and it has been found to be unhelpful. The chapter on neurological emergencies is poor. Delirium and stupor are combined inappropriately and the advice on management of delirium is unhelpful. The advice on stroke is brief and does not discuss clinical diagnosis of site of stroke or swallowing assessment.

It is unfortunate that the chapter on future directions in acute hospital care did not discuss any of the UK models other than day hospitals. Nevertheless, it has a good description of how hospitals can promote dysfunction in previously able elderly people and different ways of preventing this.

There is enough substance in this book to confirm the idea that there is a specific knowledge base necessary for the acute care of elderly people. Despite over 30 years of UK experience of geriatricians working in acute environments, there is still a need for universal acceptance of this concept. The book would be valuable reading for all who work in acute care that involves elderly people.

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doi:10.1093/ageing/afh168

Intermediate Care of Older People

Edited by Sian Wade

Whurr Publishing, 2004. 334 pp, ISBN 1-86156-356-6. £24.50

Intermediate care was quietly incubating for many years before its official launch within the NSF for Older People in 2001. There has followed considerable activity. Practical guidance has been issued and new research commissioned (<http://www.prw.le.ac.uk/intcare/>). Real change has occurred and the majority of health and social care communities in England now have operational intermediate care services offering earlier hospital discharges and crisis intervention. Many practical issues are being addressed, such as the complexities of multi-agency working, service co-ordination, timely medical assessments and solutions to national shortages in therapy disciplines. New areas of debate have also emerged: issues around capacity planning, the role of