
With increasing pressure of clinical work, a plethora of scientific and evidence-based literature to keep track of, and the rapid pace of advancement in technology, surgeons and physicians are left with little time for research. Fortunately, many surgeons still endeavour to foray into clinical (and rarely basic) research for a variety of reasons—to satisfy clinical curiosity, beef up their curriculum vitae or even as a requirement for continued academic growth. It is essential that young and creative individuals are encouraged to perform research and are given incentives to participate in research, ideally under the mentorship of more experienced investigators. A review that outlines basic concepts in research and presentation of data is thus always welcome. This handy little book is sure to fulfill many of the requirements of a prospective surgical researcher.

After a couple of Forewords from both sides of the Atlantic, the book begins with an overview of a research project from plan to publication. The next couple of chapters focus on the budding surgeon and give valuable guidance on the importance of the basic sciences and how to chart the course of research. Additional useful topics cover writing a research protocol, conduct of randomized trials and prospective observational studies.

Two very useful chapters discuss basic statistics and meta-analysis. It is certainly a difficult job to tackle these topics with aplomb and one wishes that these were demystified even more. A good theoretical overview is offered, but this is an area which could have done with profuse examples and illustrations. While most of the terminology is very well covered, and the jargon cleared for the new initiate to interpret scientific literature, direct practical applicability is sparse especially in the research setting.

Most of the contributors are from South Asia (especially Sri Lanka), which adds to its international acceptability, particularly in the developing world, where innumerable patients are potential subjects, yet there is much less meaningful research.

The chapters on writing abstracts, papers, theses and making oral presentation are full of useful nuggets of practical information—for example, how to respond to questions after a presentation, what editors seek in a paper, and matters of writing style. The most valuable part of this book for all readers, not just those bent on research, are the two final chapters dealing with critical appraisal of scientific literature and research misconduct.

While the book certainly lives up to its aims of guiding the interested on all aspects of research, it is not complete enough to be a sole volume of reference. Even though an encyclopaedic work would detract from its readability, some more detail in many of the topics would have been ideal. Topics such as optimal use of audiovisual aids, computers and other technical aids, tips on starting and running a surgical research laboratory, details on funding, including applying for grants, could only add to the value of this book. Another area of contemporary research—the fully funded ‘Sponsored drug trial or material research’ has also not been included—a useful source of funds, but not to be taken lightly, with care to have inbuilt safeguards for subjects as well as investigators, as many of these safeguards are treated with extreme suspicion!

All the chapters are well referenced. However, for those who are excited by this volume, and are incited into additional study, a general bibliographic recommendation for further reading would be a welcome addition in the next edition. Despite being a multi-author book, it does not have drawbacks of non-uniformity of style nor is there any duplication of the topics, and it has been tightly edited. It has a reasonably readable typeface, albeit with sparse illustrations and even rarer humour! However, the timeless nature of the topic lends itself to a long and useful shelf-life. Although the title appears to address only surgical researchers, it would equally benefit physicians in all areas of medicine. Even the examples in most topics are non-surgical!

In an area where there is major paucity of the written word, it is a very useful and inexpensive addition to the armamentarium of every surgeon, who must be a researcher.

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This book is intended for the practical classes for undergraduate students of medicine, dentistry, physiotherapy, medical laboratory technology, nursing and physiology. The learning objectives of all these courses (in any university) are very different even when we consider a given practical exercise. Therefore, the possibility of catering to all the courses with this practical book is unrealistic.

This book is a good substitute for a practical manual at the MB,BS and BSc (Physiology) level. It gives no clue to the student as to the objectives for doing a particular experiment, what physiological principles are being taught, what kind of unexpected results can be encountered and how to interpret the results.

The inclusion of viva questions with answers will help students
face the examination but definitely not encourage them to think of the answers based on what results they got and what they learnt in their didactic classes. This will not help or encourage them to integrate the theoretical and applied aspects of various experiments. Therefore, this could be a good practical book for students to clear a physiology practical examination but not for the top 30%--40% students who aim to understand the subject and use physiology as the basis of medical practice.

The book covers most experiments being taught in medical colleges. Since the book is not different or superior to the books already available on the subject, it may find only limited appeal. Inclusion of actual graphs and photographs would have improved the presentation. The cover picture has no association with the experiments given in the book. The price of the book is reasonable.

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Most Indian medical students and doctors have little interest in the fascinating topic of the history of medicine. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is the relative lack of books published on this topic in India. Though there is no mention in the preface as to why the author set about writing the book, or who the target reader is, I assume it is meant to be an introductory book on the subject. If so, the book succeeds. (A conflict of interest statement at this point: I have co-authored, with the late Professor S. N. Kothare, a similar book, entitled *An introduction to the history of medicine*, available at [www.histmedindia.org](http://www.histmedindia.org)).

The usual suspects are dealt with in reasonable detail and readers will learn about Galen, Vesalius, Pasteur and others as well as about the beginnings of radiology, anaesthesia, the stethoscope, etc. I discovered interesting tidbits such as 'Laennec learnt Greek... [because] he wanted to read the Hippocratic corpus in the original' and that Robert Koch ate 500 g of butter daily to measure succinic acid levels in his urine. (Not surprisingly, the experiment made him ill!) Biological warfare, it appears, was invented by the Tartars in the fourteenth century when corpses of plague victims were catapulted over citadel walls in the Crimea.

However, there are lacunae as well. Obstetrics and gynaecology are barely mentioned; even Semmelweis gets only half a page. There is practically no mention of Indian contributions, apart from the ancient days. However, the most serious flaw is the absence of HIV and AIDS in the book. There are also innumerable printer's devils. For instance, Leeuwenhoek's first name is spelt Anton on page 106 but Antony on page 275, The Salpetriere hospital is spelt Salpetriere (p. 169). Page 239 as well as the index refer to André Cournand and Werner Frossmann (pioneers of cardiac catheterization)—instead of Cournand and Forssmann, respectively.

Such errors mar the book which is otherwise convenient to carry and inexpensive.

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Professor Pasricha and his team have tried hard to put in their original research work of pulse therapy in pemphigus and other diseases in this book in a very informative manner in addition to explaining the clinical aspects of pemphigus and the laboratory diagnosis. There are 12 chapters covering the history of dexamethasone-cyclophosphamide pulse (DCP) therapy, selection of patients for the pulse therapy regimen, charting the clinical course and monitoring patients, management of concomitant diseases, safety and toxicity of the DCP regimen, pulse therapy in other diseases, and variations and modifications of the standard regimen. In chapters 9 and 11 the experience of pulse therapy in 500 patients at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences as well as in other reputed medical centres is documented, which speaks volumes about the efficacy and tolerability of DCP therapy in pemphigus vulgaris and other diseases. The material in this book is well organized.

However, in a work of this nature, certain guidelines need reassessment such as the continuation of antitubercular therapy (ATT) as long as the patient is receiving DCP, particularly in those with concomitant tubercular infection (p. 44) since the fixed duration of the ATT regimen is followed even for immunocompromised patients with HIV infection.

Following the publication of the results of DCP therapy by various authors in national and international journals, and the release of the first two editions of this book, it has become a popular method of treatment among dermatologists for the management of pemphigus and other diseases.

If you wish to use DCP therapy, this is the book for you. In spite of reservations by many dermatologists about the safety of this regimen, this therapy has become the standard treatment for...
pemphigus at different medical centres in India and abroad because there is almost no chance of the patient developing a relapse if the regimen is followed strictly.

The book is likely to be useful for dermatologists and physicians in practice and teaching, residents and postgraduate students. The book is affordable for all. The general appearance of the book is good and appealing. The legibility of the typeface and clarity of illustrations and graphs are very satisfactory. I strongly recommend this book to all dermatologists and postgraduate students, who should read it before administering DCP therapy in pemphigus and other diseases. No library should be without this book.

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The quality of a hospital infection control programme is a reflection of the overall standard of care provided by the institution. A good infection control programme reduces the rate of nosocomial infection, the length of hospital stay, and the cost of hospitalization and antibiotic therapy. Due to an increase in mortality, morbidity and cost of treatment in hospitals, the field of hospital infection control has grown over the years.

Information to guide evidence-based infection control practices is very limited and estimates vary on the proportion of infections that can be prevented. However, one thing is certain that all clusters and epidemics, which continue to occur in hospitals, can be prevented by proper infection control practices. Earlier, infection control practices were not given much attention due to the availability of a good armamentarium of antibiotics. This complacency has backfired by the emergence of multidrug-resistant nosocomial pathogens, to the extent that we have re-entered the pre-antibiotic era. Antimicrobials continue to be used extensively resulting in ever increasing resistance.

This only emphasizes the need for a book on hospital-acquired infection. This book is easy to read with beautiful illustrations. It starts with an optimistic note on the attitude required by healthcare personnel. This is interestingly depicted on the cover which shows a thumb up with a gloved hand.

Some of the important issues of quality assurance and managerial response are described in the book. Our system of medical education does not prepare us for these issues but every doctor is expected to be in the know. Similarly, legal aspects of hospital-associated infections have been addressed—an area where very little is known. Another new area covered is that of risk management where risks can be eliminated or minimized proactively. The inclusion of environmental management and engineering control is also well discussed.

Some chapters describe various methods relevant to an infection control programme which can be a good guide for hospitals to formulate their standard operating procedures. The book has some routine chapters on source, transmission and control of hospital-associated infections. The clinical practice guidelines provided in the book will be very useful for clinicians. The authors have rightly included a chapter on infections transmitted by blood, solid organs and implants. Another challenging area that the book deals with is antibiotic policy which is much neglected in our healthcare settings. Hopefully, readers will be stimulated to take some bold steps regarding the antibiotic policy in their workplaces.

The book should be informative for all those involved in patient care including clinicians, clinical microbiologists, nurses and hospital managers.

It could have been more interesting for Indian readers if some Indian data were also included. Our environment, resources and population differ and so also some of the issues regarding hospital-associated infections. The profile of microorganisms and their resistance pattern which can help to formulate antibiotic policy could have been included. With so many disinfectants available in the Indian market, it would have been useful to discuss some related aspects to help healthcare professionals make right choices.

Even though the price of the book is a deterrent for an Indian practitioner, it is worth possessing.

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