

## ***Book Review***

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### **The Oxford Textbook of Medicine Fourth Edition on CD ROM**

DA Warrell, TM Cox and JD Firth

I approached this 'book' for review with two main ideas – one to review how spinal cord injury was presented and the other to use it as a medical update on the general medicine aspects of knowledge needed with spinal cord medicine and for the rarer details needed for the unusual occurrences in everyday spinal cord practice.

The spinal cord injury section is a good introduction for those with no previous knowledge of the topic and it is difficult to give an evidence-based review of management, where practice does vary from region to region within the UK. It is important to impart knowledge to new readers that spinal cord medicine covers far more than fracture management and this chapter helps with this message.

For the more serious business of reviewing specific medical problems I found the CD-ROM easy to use once I got over the need to turn the page and I found the layout of the chapters and indexing was very user friendly. The advantage of a CD-ROM over a book such as the ability to zoom-in on pictures and tables is useful and the ability to print lists, for example, for the

causes of red eyes, I did find useful and would use it. I enjoyed the way the chapters are written and found the style of many parts of the 'textbook' well integrated unlike many on-line 'textbooks' with no common set-up making the following of a subject from chapter to chapter difficult. As expected of the OTM, there were very few syndromes or conditions that one could not find some mention of, but more importantly the common medical occurrences were well planned, well covered and I felt that the items I looked at gave me the information I needed to use appropriately even if the main outcome was to refer on. The narrative chapters of the patient, adolescent medicine and the chapters involving psychiatric issues and medicine were also a good read, not just mind numbing facts and figures.

I did find it strange not having a book to leaf through and do feel I learn better by holding a book, but I would definitely use the CD-ROM to dip into for information as a first choice before searching the web and would recommend this for any spinal department library rather than for personal use.

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