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Mike Grace, Editor, British Dental Journal,
 64 Wimpole Street WIG 8YS

Interpreting dental radiographs

K. Homer, J. Rout, V. E. Rushton and N. Wilson
 London: Quintessence Publishing Co. Ltd, 2003
 price: £28, pp164
 ISBN 1850970521

This publication is the first of three radiology books forming part of a new Quintessentials for General Dental Practitioners Series. Written by three experienced dental radiologists, it draws upon their expertise to help dentists interpret radiographs and highlights some of the common pitfalls which may be encountered.

The first chapter is a quick reminder of the relevant basic principles of radiology and includes simple physics, image geometry and localisation using radiographs. The authors underline the importance of developing a systematic method of examining radiographs.

An understanding of normal anatomy is fundamental when interpreting radiographs. The second chapter is devoted to this and includes explanations of how variations in appearance may arise and how normal features may emulate disease. This chapter is clearly written and particularly well illustrated.

Dental caries, the assessment of roots and unerupted teeth, periodontal disease and inflammatory pathology account for the majority of radiographs taken by dental practitioners. These topics are correspondingly well covered in the book. The authors emphasise the importance of radiographic technique for obtaining optimal information whilst recognising the limitations of radiographs. Diagnosis of both caries and periodontal disease has many potential difficulties, which are clearly explained and helpfully illustrated. Selection criteria are given for the radiographic assessment of caries and the chapter detailing radiographic assessment of the periodontal tissues includes recently revised guidelines.

The remainder of the book contains chapters discussing trauma to the teeth and jaws, mixed density and radiopaque

lesions, radiolucencies and anomalies of teeth. The text focuses on the important clinical features and radiological signs and successfully avoids overloading the reader with unnecessarily detailed information.

One of the difficulties with radiology textbooks can be the reproduction of exceptions, the radiographs are clear and almost all the conditions and features described in the text are illustrated. A minor irritation is occasionally having the corresponding radiograph over the page from the description. In addition to many radiographs and diagrams, a few photographs of clinical cases help illustrate the text. Throughout the book there are several tables containing important features that can help distinguish between conditions with similar radiological appearances.

At 161 pages, this book is not meant to be an all-encompassing text. It gives a good general overview whilst concentrating on the conditions which are commonly encountered in practice. The small size of the book coupled with the clear, concise text makes for an exceptionally easy and informative read. Although this book is aimed primarily at general practitioners, any dentist or undergraduate interpreting radiographs will find it extremely helpful and informative.

D. Thompson

Oral soft tissue diseases: a reference manual for diagnosis and management

J. R. Newland, T. F. Meiller, R. L. Wynn and H.L. Crossley
 Hudson: Lexi-Comp Inc, 2002
 price: US\$49.95 pp138
 ISBN 1591950139

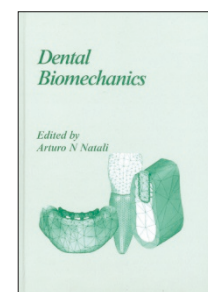
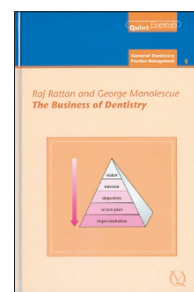
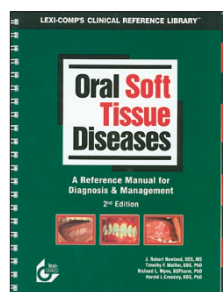
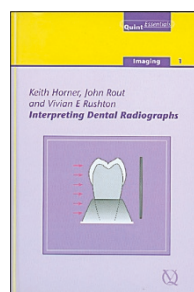
This book has been written specifically for dental practitioners in the United States of

America to use as a chair-side reference manual in the diagnosis and management of oral soft tissue diseases. The text is also available together with four related titles on a single CD.

The book is divided into ten sections. The introductory section is well presented with excellent clinical photographs to illustrate the general principles of patient examination and diagnostic investigations. The following seven sections describe specific diagnostic categories of oral soft tissue diseases (including the usual white lesions, red lesions, ulcerated lesions and soft tissue enlargements). Most of the conditions described are those considered most likely to be seen in a practice setting. The authors have also included some clinical entities which they feel present diagnostic challenges or are associated with life threatening disease or an occupational risk to a member of the dental team. The ninth section is referred to as the 'Drug section' and the final section as 'Special topics'.

From an educational perspective the information provided in the first eight sections is not new, however, it is clearly presented in simple bullet point format and illustrated with numerous high quality photographs. For the most part, the clinical details alluded to are appropriate for dental practitioners and undergraduate dental students in the United Kingdom as well as those in the United States of America. However, it is important that the reader exercises caution with regard to some of the treatment recommendations as these occasionally reflect American rather than British practice.

Unfortunately the drug section is one area of weakness for the book. The heading on the cover page is somewhat misleading as it refers to an 'Alphabetical listing of drugs commonly used in the treatment of oral soft tissue diseases'. Perhaps this should read more correctly 'commonly used in the United States'. This section is confusing and does not accurately reflect current prescribing practice in the United



Kingdom. It makes reference to American brand names and also refers to drugs that a dental practitioner in the United Kingdom could not prescribe using the Dental Practitioners Formulary. Additionally, there are several drugs that one would expect a dental practitioner in the United Kingdom to prescribe which are not listed in this section.

Some variations in clinical practice between the two countries can also be detected in the final section referred to as 'Special topics'. For example, details regarding the prophylactic use of antibiotics to prevent endocarditis follow American rather than British guidelines and the reader should be aware of this.

Overall, this book is a concise, well illustrated reference text which could be useful to dental students as well as dental practitioners so long as they are cautious in their interpretation of the final two sections.

J. James

The business of dentistry (general dentistry practice manager series)

R. Rattan and G. Manolescu
London: Quintessence Publishing Co. Ltd, 2002
price: £28, pp145
ISBN 1850970580

Any new book which will add to the current store of business knowledge and skills of those in dental practice is to be welcomed, and *The business of dentistry* provides an interesting and personal overview for anyone who owns or manages a practice. The authors in this instance have set themselves a gargantuan task and by their own admission, have found it a challenging one. In his preface Raj Rattan says that the authors 'had more material than we could possibly hope to include'. The authors' choice of material for inclusion has therefore been an interesting

one and what they have chosen to leave out perhaps even more so, both reflecting their personal approach to the business of dentistry.

The book falls very much into two halves, reflecting the interests of each author and some may find the shift in style between the two halves uncomfortable. The first half of the book explores determining the service and offering of a dental practice and planning for success, together with looking at developing and marketing a patient-centred practice. The author of the first part of the book, Raj Rattan is at pains to point out the synergy between business and professional ethics and this theme runs through much of his part of the book.

The second part of the book devotes itself to finance, and provides an overview of the financial areas that people interested in the business of dentistry need to acquaint themselves with. However, the real dichotomy of the book is an apparent difference between a business led approach in the first half and an lifestyle-business led approach in the second half.

In the first half of the book, Raj Rattan has chosen to lay before us a palette of management theories, and he discusses these in relation to dental practice. A number of these are already well-known within dentistry but some references may provide new insights. It could be argued that the theories and management approaches the author has selected may not be wholly appropriate and relevant to some dental practices at first reading, but they are thought-provoking and allow the reader to develop his own views as to their relevance. The book may have benefited from a stronger bridge being built between the theory and the practical application, but there is a lot of ground to cover in a relatively slim volume.

One senses that the authors have had to make some difficult choices about what to include, and I was interested to see seven pages devoted to Stephen Covey's work but very little on the role of staff and the development of key skills

within the business of dentistry at a time when the contribution of people and their management in ensuring successful business is being highlighted.

The book contains a particularly interesting chapter on marketing, and many readers will find the bibliography at the end of each chapter in the first half of the book a fertile ground for further exploration of some of the ideas and theories.

F. Stuart-Wilson

Dental Biomechanics

A. N. Natali (ed)
London: Taylor & Francis, 2003
price: £62.72, pp304
ISBN 0415306663

This book consists of 264 pages broken into 12 chapters. It covers diverse topics of biomechanics relating to dentistry from mechanics of bone tissue in the periodontal ligament through to titanium based materials. There are two sections of specific interest for orthodontics and there is a reasonable reading list/reference list at the end of each chapter. The book covers many of the techniques incorporating mechanics within dentistry, including finer element analysis and other mechanical considerations. There are sections on different types of models, describing how materials behave under mechanical load.

Overall the book is reasonably well put together although this reviewer finds that some of the drawings, particularly of dental structures could be improved. The morphology on teeth seems to vary considerably. Additionally, it is always disappointing in a reference list of a book of this type to find outside citations to other books are included when what we should be moving towards is more evidence base, with specific articles providing the baseline data.

The cost of this book, however, whilst reflecting a professional presentation, does seem a little overstated.

F. McDonald