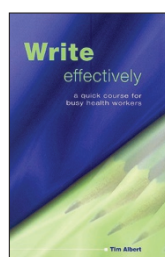


Book reviews

Books, videos, CD-ROMs, DVDs and any other relevant items submitted for a review in the BDJ should be addressed to:

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WRITE EFFECTIVELY: A QUICK COURSE FOR BUSY HEALTH WORKERS



T. Albert
UK: Radcliffe
price £21.95; pp 148
ISBN 9781846191350

The art of effective writing, as Tim Albert points out many times in this extremely readable book about effective writing, is achieving the objective of getting your message across to the people you hope will read it - your target audience. In other words writing effectively isn't just about being read but also about being understood.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part consists of ten basic chapters with exercises for the readers to complete. The second part, titled 'After-sales service', takes another look at the areas most people may still find difficult with suggested remedies for any areas still causing them problems. Part 3 is a quick summary of the importance of the actual layout used and Part 4 (titled 'For the very keen') looks at common clichés, words often misspelled, grammatical terms, punctuation and similar topics. There is an index.

Tim Albert is not afraid to challenge many of the 'sacred cows' that lurk for anyone writing in the healthcare world. For example the use of the 'false feedback loop', where a piece of writing is checked and amended by various other people who are not part of the target audience and who thus make alterations that are inappropriate (usually for political or personal reasons), weakening the message and in some cases mak-

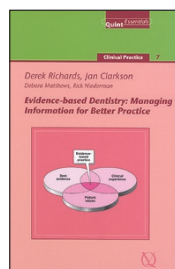
ing the writing virtually unreadable. While he covers the subjects you would expect (such as the importance of having a deadline) he also looks at other areas (such as not knowing when to stop researching and start writing).

The layout of the book is attractive, consisting of plenty of variety as well as clear paragraphs, discussion points and tasks in separate boxes and short chapters that look achievable. There are just over 140 pages.

Summing up, I would have no hesitation in stating that the book achieves its own objective of providing a fairly comprehensive course on writing for healthcare workers, clearly providing principles of writing that apply to most forms of writing (from the scientific paper to a simple report or patient leaflet). For me the most important page in the book is page 53 which covers the question of whether the structure of the writing is appropriate - so essential for effective writing. And the last word in the book, the epilogue, is typical Tim Albert when he quotes himself in the phrase 'I hate writing. Having written is great.'

M. Grace

EVIDENCE-BASED DENTISTRY: MANAGING INFORMATION FOR BETTER PRACTICE



D. Richards, J. Clarkson, D. Matthews, R. Niederman
UK: Quintessence
price £28.00; pp 156
ISBN 9781850971269

This text is an excellent new addition to the 'Quintessentials for General

Dental Practitioners' series. The aim is 'to provide both undergraduates and postgraduates of all ages with an introduction to evidence-based dentistry and the techniques with which to apply it in practice'. It does achieve this objective and I would recommend this introductory text to undergraduates and postgraduates alike.

It consists of 13 chapters followed by an appendix, glossary and index. This compact hardback is light, glossy, well presented and easy to read. Each chapter follows a logical pattern with aims and objectives clearly stated at the beginning, and key points summarised at the end.

The opening chapter defines and introduces the principles of practising the 'five-stage evidence based dentistry' method. Early chapters focus on study design, introducing hierarchy of evidence and including useful reference websites for evidence-based guidelines. Clinical scenarios are used throughout to enable the reader to work through the evidence-based process. Later chapters outline how to critically appraise different study designs with a particularly useful reference table of critical appraisal questions. Interpretation of results and diagnostic tests are also covered with risks, odds, sensitivity, specificity and predictive values explained. Clinical scenarios and practical calculations help understanding and engage the reader. The glossary of terms towards the end of the text defines and explains many statistical, study design and appraisal terms frequently cited in the literature.

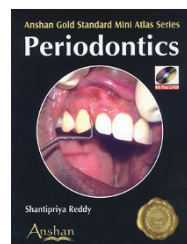
This book provides an excellent introduction to the subject and will enable the reader to adopt the evidence-based

method in everyday practice. It is also a useful reference guide, which clearly describes how to critically appraise new information. The clinical scenarios chosen are of particular relevance to the general dental practitioner. The evidence-based method described encourages the reader to regularly ask questions, search for the best evidence, critically appraise the information, apply the evidence and evaluate the outcome.

New information and techniques which influence patient care and potentially alter everyday practice are continually being produced and published. The importance of the evidence-based approach, which enables practitioners to manage and appraise new information, cannot be over-emphasised. Key concepts are outlined in this text and relevant clinical scenarios are chosen to demonstrate how to practise the evidence-based method.

C. Harte

MINI ATLAS OF PERIODONTICS



S. Reddy
UK: Anshan
price £19.99; pp 171
ISBN 9781905740420

This pocket sized mini atlas is one of 30 in the mini atlas series published by Anshan covering a range of disciplines within medicine and health sciences. It is written by Shantipriya Reddy who is currently a professor in the department of periodontics at Dr Shyamala Reddy Dental College in Bangalore in India. This author has also written a textbook on clinical periodontology and periodontics.

The book is divided into 14 chapters. Initial chapters cover the subjects of biology of periodontal disease, dental plaque, calculus and other aetiological factors, gingival inflammation and clinical features of gingivitis. These are followed by chapters on periodontal pocket, bone loss and patterns of bone destruction and diagnosis of periodontal diseases. Surgical periodontal procedures are described briefly in gingivectomy, periodontal flap, osseous

and mucogingival surgery and suturing techniques chapters.

The text, which is presented in an easy to read and follow format, is supported by numerous illustrations and diagrams and some tables which make it quick to read and understand. However, most of the pictures in this mini atlas including the one on the cover are of poor quality and out of focus which make the book unattractive and unappealing to read through. In addition, the accompanying CD-ROM is not useful as it only has the same clinical pictures contained in the book with even poorer quality.

Outdated information, such as using the old classification of periodontal diseases such as adult, juvenile and refractory periodontitis, makes the book appear old fashioned and unreliable as it does not comply with the current UK teachings on classification of periodontal diseases and conditions. Also, an inaccurate treatment modality in treating pseudo/gingival pockets by root planning is mentioned.

Furthermore, some important aspects of basic periodontology are not covered such as Basic Periodontal Examination (BPE) and grading systems for mobility and furcation involvement as well as plaque and bleeding indices. In my opinion these are fundamental topics to cover in this book, especially if it is to target the undergraduate students as an introductory text, as the author aims to do. Other essential topics that are surprisingly not covered include the role of smoking, drugs and systemic diseases in periodontal diseases.

Overall, I disagree with the author that this mini atlas would be suitable for practitioners with a special interest in periodontics and postgraduate students, as it contains very basic and superficial information in periodontology. I doubt its suitability for undergraduate students for the reasons mentioned above.

D. Turani