BOOK REVIEW

HANDBOOK OF ORAL DISEASES FOR MEDICAL PRACTICE

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Handbook of oral diseases for medical practice is a comprehensive guide on oral diseases, aimed at medical and other health practitioners. It was authored by dental specialists from around the world and published by Charles Sturt University in New South Wales, Australia.

The book is promoted as a tool for the diagnosis and management of oral health conditions for health practitioners without dental qualifications. It highlights the strong links between oral and general health, the role of dentists in managing conditions of the head and neck not related to teeth, and seeks to share this knowledge with those outside the field of dentistry to improve health outcomes for patients.

The book is laid out in four parts. Part one is concise and covers normal oral anatomy, dental terminology, examination and diagnostic techniques, as well as anatomical anomalies. Conditions relating to the hard tissues of the jaw are discussed in part two, leaving part three dedicated to soft tissues. Part four is reserved for 'topics of special relevance', which include trauma, infectious

diseases, cysts, tumours, systemic disease, drug-induced reactions and malignancy, amongst others.

Real effort was made to make the book suitable for non-dentists: diagnostic and management procedures are explained at a granular level, it suggests referral to dentists at appropriate times, and it employs supporting photography and diagrams to aid comprehension. It explores a broad range of topics in sufficient depth for the intended audience, and tackles each topic systematically which allows for an easy read. Its compact size also means that it is useful in a clinical setting.

A minor drawback is the extensive use of dental terminology, which makes comprehension difficult at times. In addition, while the information tends to be accurate, some lists are incomplete or misleading (eg some treatment options are set out in an exhaustive list, where an inclusive list would be more appropriate).

Structurally, the book would benefit from additional use of table summaries, and would be easier to digest if it were split into shorter parts. Furthermore, the topics within each part do not have an obvious order, which makes the book difficult to navigate. Similar books are better structured for quick reference, such as the *Pocket book of oral disease* by Crispian Scully, which is divided into ten short chapters, with topics ordered alphabetically.

Overall, the *Handbook of oral diseases for medical practice* is an interesting read, but an information-overload for medical practitioners and not the best in its category as a practical guide for oral diseases.

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