

Physician heal thyself

De-stressing doctors. A self-management guide. Valerie Sutherland, Cary L Cooper. Edinburgh: Butterworth Heinemann, 2003 (xii + 193 pp, \$74.80). ISBN 0 7506 8783 5.

THE PREVALENCE AND CONSEQUENCES of stress associated with medical practice have been a subject of research and reflection for at least three decades. Despite enormous advances in medical care over that period, there is no evidence of a decline in the experience of stress or its sequelae among our medical colleagues.

This book is intended, as the name implies, as a self-help guide for practitioners. The authors are well credentialled and well versed in the literature relating to the topic, and the book is set out in a useful and readable format. The first sections deal with an explanation of the traditional stress construct, with remaining sections dealing with prevention and management strategies. These are presented as primary prevention (strategies for stress minimisation in the work environment), secondary prevention (coping strategies for situations in which stress can not be altogether eliminated), and tertiary prevention (stress management strategies for situations where stress is established and adversely affecting the practitioner's life). The evidence for adverse psychoneuroimmunologic effects of chronic or recurrent stress is reviewed, and the book achieves a balance between behavioural, psychological and physical reasons for individual doctors to manage stress in their lives more effectively.

The academic underpinnings are presented in a clear and integrated style, and the practical strategies, while not new or revolutionary for readers, are a good summary of commonsense principles that medical practitioners routinely prescribe for their patients, but often neglect in their own lives. Although the British authors do not deal particularly with some current local stressors, including the indemnity insurance crisis and medicolegal concerns, the principles espoused are generic and the book is relevant to an Australian audience.

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Sideline tool for sports medicine

Sports injuries and emergencies. A quick-response manual. Aaron Rubin. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003 (xvii + 470 pp, \$119.95). ISBN 0 07 139610 1.

AARON RUBIN HAS ASSEMBLED a team of 46 doctors, athletic trainers and paramedical personnel from across the United States to produce a book which is intended for use as a handbook for the doctor sitting on the sidelines at American sporting contests.

It should be recognised that in the US training to practise sports medicine is one of the many elective professional development programs a doctor can undertake. These "fellowships" generally take about 1 year and are added to an intern/residency program. This book is pitched at the resident undertaking some first-hand training in sports medicine and, no doubt, caring for athletes at College level undertaking various sporting activities.

The book covers all the usual topics in orthopaedic and musculoskeletal injuries, cardiovascular and respiratory emergencies, as well as medical conditions such as asthma, exercise-induced bronchospasm, and the treatment of cardiac arrest.

There are chapters on subjects such as the psychology of injury, and a number of appendices which describe the team physician's bag, the athletic trainer's kit, emergency medical supplies etc.

The book does focus on specific sports-related injury and gives very useful guidelines for management for each of these diagnoses. It would certainly serve as a useful tool for the doctor sitting on the sidelines at a competition. The book is well illustrated, and each chapter contains a few useful current references.

The authors were not all well known to me. However, some of the names were familiar as experts in their respective areas within the domain of sports medicine. As a clinician interested in sports medicine, I found it an easy read, notwithstanding its very American focus.

The book does fill a gap in the market in that it is directed at a more sophisticated "first-aid for sport" niche. I did not find anything in the book with which I would strongly disagree, and the book is topical.

I note the retail price inscribed on my reviewer's copy was \$119.95 (presumably Australian dollars) and I would say this is expensive for a handbook. It would be valuable, though, among its target readership.

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