

BEDSIDE ICU HANDBOOK

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Publisher Armour Publishing, Singapore

Published in 2007

Paperback, 564 pages

ISBN 981-4138-73-8

Retail price SGD 30

The Bedside ICU Handbook is now into its second edition, a testament to the success of its predecessor. The new edition has kept pace with recent developments in intensive care, such as the role of steroid use in acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS).

This is a no-nonsense book on how to manage common ICU problems. As mentioned in the preface, this is not an ICU textbook or a standard reference text. References are kept to a minimum and controversial issues are omitted. Instead, a practical and didactic approach is adopted which will minimise confusion and angst among junior doctors. The book is organised according to clinical disciplines and then sub-divided into individual disease states.

To test how easy it would be to perform a search, I tried looking up three common problems in the ICU, namely: ventilator settings for patients with ARDS, blood sugar control for intensive care patients, and management of intracranial hypertension. I managed to locate the information for the management of ARDS and intracranial hypertension within two minutes, but it took me a while to locate the guidelines on the control of blood sugar for critically-ill patients. After 15 minutes of searching, I finally found it in the chapter on infectious diseases. Generally speaking though, if you had wanted to look up something in the middle of the night while on-call, you will get to the information relatively easily. For the practising intensivist, there are many useful reference tables, such as dose-adjustment tables for patients with renal impairment and practical details about therapeutic drug monitoring.

The majority of the authors are practising clinicians from Tan Tock Seng Hospital and the National Neuroscience Institute. Not surprisingly, the chapters relating to the clinical specialties that hail from these two institutions, such as neurology, neurosurgery, pulmonology, rheumatology and trauma, were particularly comprehensive. It was a pleasant surprise to find that obstetrics, burns and transplantation have also been well covered. What you will not find though is information on paediatric intensive care.

The editors have managed to pack an impressive amount of information into this 564-page handbook. Although the handbook is too large to carry in your pocket, it can be easily fit into a briefcase or medium-sized handbag. At S\$30 per copy, this book is incredible value for money. Every adult ICU should own a copy.

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