

## Book report

# The Essential Burn Unit Handbook

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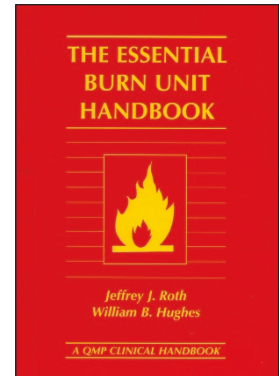
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Burn care is a rapidly changing field that is increasingly managed in very specialized units. The aim of the two authors of this book was to produce a concise distillation of current burn care based on the practices of the Philadelphia Burn Unit. The handbook was targeted primarily at trainees who are responsible for the day-to-day care of burn victims, whether they be working in emergency rooms, burn units, or general intensive care units. The chapters cover the full gamut of topics related to burn care, from pathophysiology of burn injury through specific management and general support. There are also sections on electrical, chemical and paediatric burns, plus a welcome chapter on toxic epidermal necrolysis. There is a useful glossary and adequate index.

All chapters contain a wealth of practical detail, which is clearly laid out and illustrated with simple line drawings. Examples of admission and management orders are given and, as one would expect, are typically those characteristic of North American practice. Clear explanations are given for the comprehensive range of therapeutic options described, along with their indications and contra-indications, and each chapter has an appropriate up-to-date reference list. Some of the detail I feel is rather excessive and could be misleading (e.g. there is a very busy six-point table in a comprehensive nutrition chapter, describing the composition of organ-specific enteral feeding formulae for which there is less than convincing evidence of value, but there is little discussion of the early use of jejunal feeding and its practicalities). There are also important omissions in the section on antifungals, particularly in relation to the lipid-based amphotericin preparations, the newer triazoles and caspofungin. These, however, are minor blemishes, and the authors are to be congratulated on packing a large volume of useful and practical information into a truly pocket sized

(18 × 12.5 × 0.75 cm) book. The authors have succeeded in their aim of producing a valuable and practically useful aid for medical trainees, nurses and other paramedical staff managing burn victims. The one obvious caveat is that the advice on management would have to be modified in line with local burn service practice.

### Competing interests

The author(s) declare that they have no competing interests.