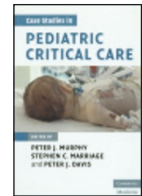


BOOK REPORT

Case Studies in Pediatric Critical Care

Kentigern Thorburn*

PJ Murphy, SC Marriage and PJ Davis: *Case Studies in Pediatric Critical Care*. Cambridge University Press, 2009, 335pp., ISBN 978-0-521-87834-0



Case Studies in Pediatric Critical Care includes 27 chapters, each written by different authors, covering 27 key paediatric intensive/critical care topics. The format for each chapter is a key paediatric intensive care theme introduced by a description of a real-life representational case, followed by a description of the actual clinical course and management of the case, leading into a discussion of the management along with a comprehensive résumé of the pertinent aspects of the case-based topic. It is a style that flows and effectively imparts tangible knowledge.

Case descriptions vary from traumatic brain injury, including bragging regarding xenon scans and jugular venous bulb catheters (both fail to impress me and lack an evidence-base), through more exotic dengue haemorrhagic fever and contemporary HIV infection, to a more courageous utilisation of a case of pertussis infection that died on extracorporeal membrane oxygenation/extracorporeal life support.

The chapter authors are to be complimented for their succinct, informative and relevantly referenced discussions. These discussions are definitely the strength of this book. Chapters are well researched and include recent references (up to the scribing time, which I estimate to be around 2005). It does not purport to be a comprehensive paediatric intensive/critical care textbook, but hones in on may key subjects in paediatric intensive/critical care, therefore transforming into a reference book as well.

All chapters are solid; some are very good - traumatic brain injury, hypoplastic left heart syndrome (despite hints of poetic licence), pertussis, drowning, hyperammonaemia, acute heart failure (especially seeing that the topic can bore easily); and some are excellent - tricyclic poisoning, total anomalous pulmonary venous connection, refractory narrow complex tachycardias. I would advise against trawling through the book chapter on chapter as this approach will cause cases to merge and some cross-covered aspects to blur.

As one would expect, you may not absolutely agree with every point of discussion - for example, there is a place for high frequency oscillatory ventilation (as rescue therapy) in life-threatening asthma, or the use of prostacyclin in patients with threatened ischaemic limbs in meningococcal disease. Discussions cover more than the nitty-gritty. All approaches are sound.

What is the target audience? This book appears to be aimed both at intensivists-in-training and as a refresher for practicing intensivists. Geographically the focus is predominantly the North American and European audience, with the odd additional modicum to connect with a more international market.

Would I recommend this book? Yes, it is best used to supplement teaching discussions and for revision and re-education when managing a similar case in your unit, that is, delving in and out of the information within the book.

Would I buy it? Yes, for our trainees' area - for quick referencing case on case with its crisp and concise information; as a supplement to standard textbooks; to draw trainees (and intensivists) into seeking wider insight.

However, my lasting criticism lies in semantics. The Editors all hail from Bristol. Bristol is an English city. The book is published by Cambridge University Press. Cambridge University is in England. The English Editors should have the courage to insist on English. Otherwise Murfy *et al.* should americanize everything.

Competing interests

The author declares that they have no competing interests.

Published: 28 January 2010

doi:10.1186/cc8836

Cite this article as: Thorburn K: A scholarly case-based educational résumé of paediatric intensive care - 'Case Studies in Pediatric Critical Care'. *Critical Care* 2010, 14:301.

*Correspondence: kent.thorburn@alderhey.nhs.uk
Department of Paediatric Intensive Care, Royal Liverpool Children's Hospital - Alder Hey, Liverpool, L12 2AP, UK and School of Host Defence and Infection, The University of Liverpool, Liverpool, L69 7ZX, UK