FUNDAMENTALS OF OPERATING DEPARTMENT PRACTICE
DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all non-medical theatre workers, without whose dedicated support, anaesthetic and surgical practice would not be possible.
FUNDAMENTALS OF OPERATING DEPARTMENT PRACTICE

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Contents

Preface ................................................................. ix
Contributors .......................................................... xiii
Introduction ........................................................ 1

Chapter 1  
The operating department practitioner, the patient and the law................................. 9  
   J. Ballance and P. Duxbury

Chapter 2  
Aspects of health and safety in the operating department ....................................... 21  
   T. Williams

Chapter 3  
The caring practitioner.............................................................................................. 27  
   A. Davey

Chapter 4  
Strategies for infection control in the operating department .................................. 35  
   A. Deane

Chapter 5  
Sterilization, decontamination and the surgical field.............................................. 43  
   T. Kerry

Chapter 6  
The fundamentals of cardiovascular physiology .................................................... 53  
   R. M. King and C. S. Ince

Chapter 7  
Fundamentals of respiratory physiology .................................................................... 63  
   E. C. Howard
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Scientific principles in relation to the anaesthetic machine</td>
<td>C. S. Ince, A. C. Skinner and E. Táft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fundamentals of artificial ventilation of the lung</td>
<td>R. R. Macmillan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Scientific principles in relation to monitoring equipment</td>
<td>C. S. Ince and A. C. Skinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Scientific principles in relation to endoscopic, laser and radiological equipment</td>
<td>G. Grice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pharmacological principles of drug administration</td>
<td>E. Whelan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The pharmacology of drugs used in general anaesthesia</td>
<td>E. Whelan and H. Davies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The local anaesthetic drugs – does the ideal agent exist?</td>
<td>A. C. Skinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The safe positioning of patients for surgery</td>
<td>S. Collins and A. Davey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Principles involved in the management and use of equipment</td>
<td>M. Greenall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Understanding suture materials</td>
<td>M. H. Scott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Fundamentals of paediatric surgery and anaesthesia</td>
<td>P. D. Booker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 19
Fundamentals of hyperthermia and hypothermia ................................................................. 203
C. S. Ince

Chapter 20
Fundamentals of fluid and electrolyte balance during surgery ............................................. 211
R. M. King

Chapter 21
The physiology of blood and its administration ................................................................. 227
P. Bolton-Maggs

Chapter 22
Fundamentals of pain relief ............................................................................................... 243
V. Nelson

Chapter 23
Fundamentals of dressings and drains in relation to wound healing .................................. 259
A. Davey and R. M. King

Chapter 24
The recovery of patients from anaesthesia and surgery ....................................................... 267
M. Maguire

Chapter 25
Fundamentals of emergency and obstetric anaesthesia ....................................................... 281
T. Ryan

Chapter 26
Identification and management of anaesthetic emergencies ................................................. 287
R. Wenstone

Chapter 27
The fundamentals of emergency resuscitation .................................................................... 299
T. Hankin

Appendixes
Appendix 1 ......................................................................................................................... 307
Appendix 2 ......................................................................................................................... 311
Appendix 3 ......................................................................................................................... 315
Appendix 4a ......................................................................................................................... 319
Appendix 4b ......................................................................................................................... 323
Appendix 5 ......................................................................................................................... 327
Index .................................................................................................................................. 331
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Institution</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Generally, textbooks are written for either nurses or anaesthetic assistants but this book seeks to embrace the knowledge needed for the generic theatre worker as envisaged in the Bevan Report. We seek to clarify the underlying principles needed for an understanding of anaesthetic and surgical practice and we do not intend to replace the readily available standard works, which should be used in conjunction with this text.

*Fundamentals of Operating Department Practice* defines the level of knowledge required for the ODP Level III qualification. It covers the practical aspects of operating department practice, where relevant.

Chapters do not follow the layout of the qualification structure but are grouped instead into areas of related knowledge. There is some intentional duplication to emphasise the importance of a particular subject, particularly when viewed from a somewhat different perspective.

National legislation, current at the time of writing, has been included but local policies and protocols have been used as illustrations. Drugs and other substances are referred to by their approved name wherever possible. Alternative names may be found by referring to the *British National Formulary* or a similar publication.

A. Davey
C. S. Ince
Liverpool, August 1999
It was about twenty five years ago that I first managed a training school for Operating Department Assistants (ODAs). The two most difficult aspects of course planning were how much theory did the trainees actually need to know and to what level and depth should those theoretical subjects be taught.

This was a time of great change because ODAs were emerging as a new grade of staff within the theatre team and, for the first time, were undertaking formally approved training with a nationally recognized qualification. Although a syllabus and a final examination were identified, there was no guidance on curriculum development or learning objectives. As a result, course planning tended to vary in quality and relevance in different parts of the country.

Trainee ODAs would often be overwhelmed by the amount of theoretical knowledge it was thought they should acquire and even when fortunate enough to have access to comprehensive medical libraries, few text books were available that were directly relevant to their field of competence. Similarly, teachers from the wide range of disciplines with whom ODAs interacted in the clinical situation would sometimes have difficulty in setting their lectures at an appropriate level. This sometimes resulted in confusion or boredom on the part of the trainees and frustration or near despair on the part of the course managers.

Other qualified staff within the operating department often had great difficulty in accepting ODAs as professionals, partly because their role and qualification was poorly understood. The situation is now very different and it is greatly to the credit of the trainees of that time, their managers and a number of theatre specialists that Operating Department Practitioners (ODPs) have become such valued members of theatre teams today, being highly regarded as skilled and knowledgeable professionals.

One of the hallmarks of professionalism includes the ability to pass onto others skills and expertise. This has been achieved through the example of excellence in personal performance and by sharing knowledge, not only with one’s peer group, but also with those from other disciplines. The publication of this book is therefore a highly significant development in that some of the contributors are themselves former ODAs who are now in senior management and education. Nurses have also made a significant contribution and it is appropriate to mention the invaluable part many of them have played as training managers, work-based assessors and verifiers in supporting the development of the generic theatre practitioner of today.

Some of the authors are senior anaesthetists and it is right to acknowledge the enormous contribution that so many of their number have made to the development of ODPs as a professional group. Particular mention should be made of Dr Colin Ince who has masterminded the production of this book from inception to publication with the same dedication and enthusiasm with which he has supported the quality of operating department practice over a period of many years.

Theatre professionals no longer need to rely exclusively on texts primarily written for doctors, nurses and other medico-technical staff. This book, which is wholly relevant to the occupational standards of their qualification, also serves as a valuable resource for those wishing to access the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Operating Department Practice. In addition it provides a good background to the advance practice units of the extended role (Additionally Accredited Units).

It should be remembered that operating department practitioners are not only the nursing and technical staff who provide non-medical assistance within the theatre team but they are also caring professionals in a wide range of clinical situations throughout the health-care setting. They currently have direct contact with patients in such areas as Recovery Units, Accident and Emergency Departments, Day Care Surgery Units, Intensive Therapy Wards and Resuscitation Teams. Good quality care should be available to all patients wherever they are found and operating department practice therefore incorporates those care standards, which already apply in nursing practice.

This is a weighty text, but every chapter has the merit of maintaining the essential link between theory, practice and
clinical application. It complements rather than supple-ments existing books and the diversity of subject matter included reflects the wide range of background knowledge that is required to underpin the performance of an effec-tive ODP.

This book will therefore be a valuable resource for many groups of health care professionals, such as trainee doctors, pre and post-graduate nurses, students of midwifery and medico-technical staff, working in a variety of high dependency fields. Operating department practitioners at all levels of experience and career development will find it an essential and comprehensive reference. It is worth quoting Dr Terry Ryan from Chapter 25 (Emergency and Obstetric Anaesthesia): “There is no doubt that the experience and training of the entire theatre team will have a major impact upon the outcome of any . . . operation. Without the necessary practical abilities theoretical knowledge is of little value.”

This text addresses these issues across the whole spectrum of operating department practice and will help to support the maintenance of the highest standards of care, safety and treatment available to patients.

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Acknowledgements

The idea for this book originated with Mr T. McCann, Principal Operating Department Assistant at Whiston Hospital, but the editors must also thank the publishers for suggesting that it should be written and for their support and help.

In addition, we are most grateful to Mrs S. Comer, Personal Assistant to Dr C. S. Ince, who patiently corrected the grammar and proof-read the text, and to Mrs K. Morton RGN, who is also an ODP, for ensuring that the text was understandable.

We are also grateful to our many colleagues who have given of their time and expertise, often at short notice and to St Helens and Knowsley Hospitals Trust for allowing us to reproduce the version of the consent form and information sheet as shown in Appendices 4a and 4b.

Mrs A. Davey
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Liverpool, August 1999