Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Women’s Health

This is the essential textbook for students of obstetrics and gynaecology as well as women’s health more generally. Thoroughly modern in approach, it covers clinical topics and surgical procedures as well as providing detailed commentary on the contemporary social, psychological and economic issues that affect women’s health.

Many authors who are the acknowledged leaders in their respective research fields have contributed succinct chapters. In this way both students and health professionals are able to benefit from their expertise in a lively and accessible text. It will be a valuable resource for health professionals, including general practitioners, nurses, physiotherapists and health workers. Specific sections address women’s mental health, genetics, prescribing for women, health promotion, hormones throughout the life cycle, and psychological and behavioural issues. The text is fully illustrated with many useful guides, tables, photographs and diagrams.

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Contents summary

List of colour photos x
List of contributors xii
Preface xviii
Acknowledgements xx

Part 1 Women's health
Section 1 The health professional role 1
2 Women and health 48
3 Behavioural and mental health issues 98
Photo section 1 Normal anatomy and common conditions 144

Part 2 Early life
Section 4 Hormones and early development 147
5 The female child and adolescent 183

Part 3 The reproductive years
Section 6 Pre-pregnancy and antenatal care 209
7 Labour and childbirth 252
8 The newborn infant and postnatal care 273
Photo section 2 Neonate to adolescent 306
Section 9 Pregnancy problems 309
10 Induction of labour, assisted deliveries and postnatal problems 364
11 Obstetric emergencies 382
Photo section 3 Obstetrics 382
Section 12 Sexual health 394
13 Common problems 453
Photo section 4 Gynaecology 498

Part 4 The middle years
Section 14 Health maintenance and disease prevention 505
15 Common complaints 528
16 Pre-cancer and cancer 556

Part 5 Older years
Section 17 Ageing and its problems 599

Part 6 Women and illness
Section 18 Surgical, medical and research issues for women 617

References 630
Abbreviations 664
Index 668
Contents

List of colour photos
List of contributors
Preface
Acknowledgements

Part 1 Women's health

1 The health professional role 1
   Interpersonal and clinical skills 2
   Prescribing for women 28
   Screening 34
   Evidence for making clinical decisions 40

2 Women and health 48
   Gender and health 49
   Ethics and women's health 56
   Women in minority groups 63
   Lifestyle issues 68
   Body image 85
   Sexuality 92
3  Behavioural and mental health issues 98
   Abuse 99
   Sexual assault 104
   Mental health and illness 114
   Loss and grief 135
   Death and dying 139

Photo section 1: Normal anatomy and common conditions 144

Part 2  Early life

4  Hormones and early development 147
   Hormones through the life cycle 148
   Conception and implantation 160
   Embryo and fetus 167
   Ambiguous genitalia 175

5  The female child and adolescent 183
   Development of the female child 184
   Vuvovaginitis 186
   Adolescence 188
   Clinical issues in the teenage years 197
   Legal issues surrounding the teenager 207

Part 3  The reproductive years

6  Pre-pregnancy and antenatal care 209
   Genetics 210
   Pre-pregnancy counselling 223
   Pregnancy 230
   Antenatal care 234
   Special situations 246
   Advice and common complaints in pregnancy 247

7  Labour and childbirth 252
   Women's experiences in labour 253
   Progress of labour 254
   Phases of labour 259
   Normal labour 265

8  The newborn infant and postnatal care 273
   The newborn infant 274
   The postnatal period 295
   Lactation and feeding 302

Photo section 2: Neonate to adolescent 306
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pregnancy problems</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maternal and perinatal mortality and morbidity</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Common presentations in early pregnancy</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second and third trimester presentations</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical disorders and pregnancy</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Induction of labour, assisted deliveries and postnatal problems</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choice for women</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Induction of labour</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abnormal labour</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abnormal fetal presentations</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assisted and operative delivery</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postpartum problems</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Obstetric emergencies</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bleeding during and after pregnancy</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prolapsed cord</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maternal collapse around delivery</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photo section 3: Obstetrics</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sexual health</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contraception</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unplanned pregnancy</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexually transmitted infections</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexual feelings and behaviour</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Common problems</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breast concerns</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subfertility</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Menstrual disturbance</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hirsutism</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pelvic pain</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pelvic mass</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photo section 4: Gynaecology</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Part 4  The middle years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Health maintenance and disease prevention</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The well woman</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breast screening</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Menstrual problems</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Menopause</td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 Common complaints</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast problems</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelvic floor disorders</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmenopausal bleeding and discharge</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Pre-cancer and cancer</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology of cancer</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premalignant change</td>
<td>558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gynaecological cancer</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles of treatment</td>
<td>577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staging, survival and spread</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The development of breast cancer</td>
<td>583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast cancer management</td>
<td>596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women and cancer</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 5 Older years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Ageing and its problems</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal ageing</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of ill health in old age</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other major issues for older women</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 6 Women and illness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Surgical, medical and research issues for women</td>
<td>617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgery</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical problems</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of colour photos

### 1 Normal anatomy and common conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2 Neonate to adolescent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>306</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3 Congenital teeth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>307</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4 Colorful images

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>308</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3 Obstetrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>392</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4 Gynaecology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>498</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4 Vaginal discharge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>499</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### List of colour photos

- **Page 500**
  - A  Fibroid uterus
  - B  Vaginal hysterectomy
  - C  Examination of an abdominal mass
  - D  X-ray of the abdominal mass
  - E  Abdominal mass at laparotomy
  - F  Ovarian dermoid cyst

- **Page 501**
  - A  Normal cytology with *Candida* infection
  - B  CIN 1
  - C  CIN II
  - D  CIN III
  - E  Acetowhite on cervix
  - F  Iodine negative area on cervix

- **Page 502**
  - A  Acetowhite on vulva
  - B  Cancer of the vulva
  - C  Endometrial cancer
  - D  Cancer of the ovary
  - E  Cancer of the cervix
  - F  Breast cancer

- **Page 503**
  - A  Simple cyst of ovary
  - B  Hydrosalpinx
  - C  Early endometriosis
  - D  Pelvic varicosities
  - E  Pelvic inflammatory disease
  - F  Liver adhesions
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Preface

The traditional obstetrics and gynaecology curriculum in many medical schools around the world has been superseded by ‘women’s health’. This includes core obstetrics and gynaecology in a broader context that is more relevant for women and those who care for them. At the same time many schools are taking a problem-based learning or case-based approach to health. This text is designed to provide a resource that incorporates both of these developments.

Asking the right questions in clinical practice

Health is more than just the absence of disease or infirmity. It also involves the context of people’s lives, their well-being and their dignity. Certainly the issues for women are broader than those of reproduction alone.

This book has a biomedical focus. It is intended for students and practising clinicians caring for women in health and illness. The importance of the psycho-social-cultural aspects of women’s lives is emphasized early in the book. We encourage the reader to use it to think of the whole woman and her interaction with her environment as each ‘clinical’ problem is encountered. Hopefully this approach will provide the reader with an introduction to a comprehensive picture of health and illness.

Although this text is not intended to cover every disease affecting women, it should stimulate the reader to consider the impact of health and disease on the whole person by asking such questions as:

- If this patient were of a different gender, would the presentation, management and outcomes be different?

- If this patient lived in a different location, belonged to a different ethnic group, or belonged to a different socio-economic group, what would be the implications for health maintenance or illness?

Using this book

The structure of this book reflects the fact that a clinical problem may vary in presentation and management depending on the stage of the person’s life cycle. Therefore, while the main section on a topic (such as breast disease) might be included in the reproductive years sections, for example, cross-references to relevant information in other sections of the book are provided where appropriate. The index can also be used to find appropriate cross-references across the life cycle, as well as to identify specific topics.

Some topics, such as screening and evidence-based medicine, are not confined to women’s health, but are included as they form the foundation of current clinical practice. Similarly, a reference list is provided at the end of this book because the information in the text is based on current evidence from the literature. Pregnancy
and childbirth issues are at the forefront of this approach, with the large collection of evidence in the Cochrane Library.

The section on the clinical interview is general, and highlights the need for sensitivity and respect that applies to any interaction with patients.

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