

Critical Care Compendium

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1001 Topics in Intensive Care & Acute Medicine

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To my family

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Preface

Uncommon clinical problems can present serious challenges in any medical specialty, particularly in those areas providing acute care. These problems tend to be overlooked even in major textbooks, they can be difficult to identify fully elsewhere and even an experienced clinician cannot be expected to remember all their relevant details. Yet these problems in total can be numerous and varied, and they may have a direct impact on patient care.

This book offers a solution. Uncommon problems relevant to intensive care and acute medicine have been gathered into a single volume, in which they have been described in sufficient detail to obviate much of the need to refer to specialized sources. The individual topics have been arranged alphabetically, as in an encyclopaedia and with ample cross-referencing to facilitate rapid access. The book is thus intended to provide an easy and practical reference for the clinician at any level faced with an uncommon acute medical problem at the bedside.

On the other hand, there are many things that this book is not intended to do. It does not replace major specialized texts, for it is not designed to cover the front-line disorders and emergencies which underpin the care of the acutely ill patient. Nor does it replace published

in-depth specialist reviews or more importantly consultant opinion of specialist colleagues – rather it is hoped to be a partner with these in the large and important boundary between intensive care and the many other medical and surgical specialties which contribute to the care of the acutely ill patient.

Recent years have seen an emphasis on intensive care without walls and on medical emergency or rapid response teams based in intensive care units but operating hospital-wide. Thus, the traditional role of intensive care medicine has become increasingly merged with acute medicine in general, and the topics in this book reflect that overlap.

The author was fortunate to be able to persuade Mr Ron Tandberg, one of Australia's leading political cartoonists, to illustrate the previous editions of this book, and his cartoons have carried over as they are more timeless than any text. His incisive wit has enlivened an otherwise perhaps tedious text to the extent that his cartoons have been referred to by some as the book's main attraction!

Finally, the author again thanks the editorial staff at Cambridge University Press for their continued support and expertise.



