CD-ROM REVIEW

The virtual procedures clinic
Boon JM, Abrahams PH, Meiring JH, Welch T.
Price: £29.50.

The aim of this interactive CD-ROM is to explore different aspects of various procedures ranging from endo-tracheal intubation to saphenous vein cutdown. It uses a Powerpoint™ presentation format to describe the indications and contraindications, anatomical pitfalls, complications and reviews of the following procedures:

- Lumbar puncture
- Cricothyroidotomy
- Endo-tracheal intubation
- Pericardiocentesis
- Saphenous vein cutdown
- Central venous catheterization
- Knee joint aspiration
- Wrist and digital nerve block

The guide is set up as a virtual laboratory which consists of:

- A clinical background room
- A clinical anatomy laboratory
- A procedure simulation room
- A library for further reading and references

Each section takes the reader through the necessary factual and practical knowledge required for the particular procedure, including indications, contraindications, how to set up for, perform and monitor for possible complications. The clinical anatomy section is particularly useful with still photographic images that have annotated anatomical schematics overlaid at the readers request so as to demonstrate best approach and manoeuvres. There are also useful practical hints for performing the procedures with minimum difficulty. The images range from surface anatomy and prosection photographs to anatomical schematics of the relevant area. There are also voice recordings which facilitate understanding as the commentary can be run whilst studying the anatomy and approach.

The factual content is very good and the procedures reviewed are useful for junior trainees from all specialties, both surgical and medical. However, the format is essentially a Powerpoint™ presentation and this means that it lacks interactivity. Although the still images are useful, video clips would be much more helpful, especially for readers who are not accustomed to the practicalities of the procedures. From a technical point of view the installation is simple and does not require any special operating systems or graphics, but the method of scrolling back and forth from the various "rooms" can become laborious and a web based navigation system for the programme would make it much more user friendly.

This piece of work may be useful for both students and trainees. In particular it has all the relevant knowledge required for each procedure.

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for membership vivas. It is also helpful for trainees who just want a quick, on the spot anatomical recap of knowledge prior to performing a procedure that they have not performed for a while. This information would be very useful to juniors if kept on a more portable format e.g. on a PDA or indeed accessible on the world-wide-web. There is a newer version in the pipeline, by the same authors, which aims towards a more interactive learning environment. All in all a sound piece of work but the upgraded version should be keenly awaited.

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