

Let sleeping dogs lie? What men should know before getting tested for prostate cancer

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Australia: Sydney
University Press, 2010

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\$25.00

Prostate cancer is an emotive topic and, driven by media reporting, is filled with misinformation, particularly in the area of screening. What is true and widely reported is that prostate cancer is a leading cause of male cancers and a leading cause of male cancer deaths, particularly in older men. As our community seeks a more proactive and preventive approach to health, male patients are keen to be active doers and many see getting a test as a clear vindication of 'doing the right thing'.

However, like all heated and controversial debates, there is a lot more to it once you delve



more deeply. Given the complexity of the information, it is the role of the general practitioner to assist male patients to make an informed decision about whether to screen, to describe any limitations to screening, and to address issues relating to management.

Chapman and his co-authors, through this well written book, provide the reader with a balanced commentary and navigate the reader through the basics of prostate cancer, management issues, and finally to the issue of that of prostate cancer screening. The authors also clearly illustrate these complex issues through deconstructing numbers and figures that are easily understood for both GPs and patients.

Particularly striking is the first chapter in which the authors describe the reasons for writing this book. Of interest is the fact that no national or international cancer institution currently advocates population wide screening for prostate cancer. An

additional notable feature of 'Let sleeping dogs lie?' is also how it addresses arguments made by pro-screening urologists and research papers that look favourably to prostate cancer screening. This book provides a counterpoint that will provide the busy GP with answers that may be asked of them by their male patients.

Given the current media and community based interest in prostate cancer screening, this book can assist both the patient and the busy GP to make a fully informed decision in the area of prostate cancer screening and management. What is clear is that until we have definitive evidence to advocate a population wide screening program, GPs will need to assist their male patients in making a decision that is right for them.

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Listening to Children and Young People in Healthcare Consultations

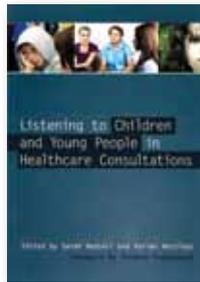
Edited by Sarah Redsell
and Adrian Hastings

United Kingdom: Radcliffe
Publishing Ltd

ISBN 13 978 1846 193 460,
\$47.95

A substantial emphasis is placed on communication skills in the general practice curriculum and communication forms an integral part of the clinical consultation. However, many of the resources on communication skills focus on the adult patient-doctor relationship. This book provides a valuable insight into the paediatric and adolescent realm of communication in consultations, a considerable proportion of a busy GP's patient population.

The initial chapter, which details the development of child healthcare through the centuries largely from a British perspective, makes for an interesting introduction to the topic. Clinical scenarios are used extensively to demonstrate suggested communication techniques. In chapters three and seven, titled



'the third voice in the consultation' and 'improving communication' respectively; multiple case studies are detailed and methodically dissected to illustrate various consultation styles. Chapter four, titled 'involving children' sets out a detailed explanation of the consultation process as it relates to children and is a worthwhile read regardless of the reader's stage in their general practice career. The content of each chapter draws on research published in the field and this book is referenced throughout.

This book is aimed at a wide range of healthcare professionals. As such, there is a section dedicated to the role of allied health professionals, nurses and teachers in consulting with children and young people. Although a useful reference for GPs who are often the care coordinators between these various disciplines, it is perhaps not directly relevant.

An intriguing aspect of this book is the chapter on 'listening to young carers and their families'. It provides a perceptive look into this rather unfamiliar but important area. There is

also a specific chapter addressing children with disabilities, which outlines particular skills for dealing with a range of communication challenges in such patients.

A limitation of the book is its United Kingdom focus. For the most part this is not a major drawback, however the chapter on 'consent and confidentiality' is based on legislation current in the UK and readers will need to assess its relevance in the Australian setting. Another shortcoming is in the chapter 'safeguarding children', which outlines the forms of child abuse, the importance of recognising the warning signs and the health professional's obligations in reporting abuse. However, there is little in the way of suggestions on how to facilitate a conversation into this very sensitive area. Case studies with examples of specific questioning approaches would have been useful.

Overall, however, this book is a well researched resource on consultation skills with children and adolescents and would be a valuable addition to a general practitioner's library.

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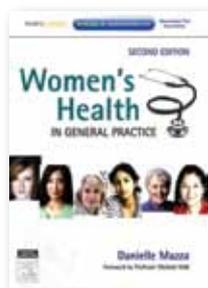
Women's Health in General Practice

Danielle Mazza

Elsevier Australia, 2011
ISBN 978 0729 538 718,
\$86.32

Dealing with the issues that specifically affect women in an evidence based but also practical manner is an enormous task. Danielle Mazza has managed to do this in a very readable and down to earth manner that makes this book not only an excellent reference book but one that can be skim read to gather a broad overview of any topic.

New information in all sections highlights the changing face of women's health and the importance of staying in touch with the most recent research and opinions. As with most fields in medicine, this is very difficult as women's health is also plagued by controversies. Basic issues that seemed undebatable just a few years ago are now being challenged. Dr Mazza has not shied away from these and presents both sides



of the arguments with their respective referenced justifications.

This book does not just deal with the hard facts but tackles areas such as the moral and ethical dilemmas facing women's health practitioners when discussing unplanned pregnancies and intimate partner violence for instance. A holistic and team based approach to women's health ensures that women's

issues are seen in the context of their place in their families and society and not just as scientific phenomena. The text is punctuated with the sorts of questions general practitioners ask themselves as they face the many different aspects of women's health in every day practice.

The case studies are not simplistic renditions of protocol usage but showcase the complexities of real life and how a practitioner balances theory, health promotion, relationships, personal preferences, culture, and follow up. As well as for personal education these would be excellent teaching material for problem based learning

scenarios or group discussion.

This book is set out with a logical progression, clear headings and an excellent index that make its negotiation efficient and effortless. The liberal use of tables, figures, boxes, key points, check lists, graphs, summaries, photos and tips for practitioners add to the ease of reading either with a quick overview or in depth study.

In this new edition of Women's Health, Dr Mazza combines the most recent evidence with case studies that bring the issues to life and make the theory immediately relevant and usable. Primary care practitioners in particular will be able to relate to the importance of a well referenced text that is also pragmatic. However, it is recommended for all who agree that women's health is a topic of importance in today's society.

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Arthritis, pregnancy and the path to parenthood

Suzie Edward May

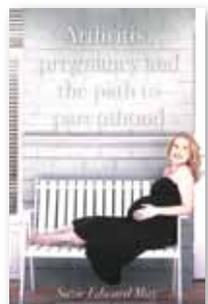
Fremantle: Vivid
Publishing, 2010

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\$29.95

With the increasing focus on informed decision making and self management, the GP has a vital role in helping patients cope with all aspects of chronic disease. This includes not only the practical aspects of diagnosis and management, but also managing the effects of chronic disease on a patient's life.

Providing patients with the appropriate level of information at various stages is an ongoing challenge, and 'Arthritis, pregnancy and the path to parenthood', by Perth author Suzie Edward May, fills an important gap in the literature.

Suzie May was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis at the age of 28 years while studying



at university, and struggled to cope with severe symptoms during her early law career. As an intelligent, self reliant woman she was determined from the beginning to understand her condition and researched it thoroughly. Several years later, when she began to consider parenthood in the context of her condition, she found little in the literature from either medical professionals or other people with arthritis to guide her through the process of decision making, stopping her medications, and coping with severe arthritis symptoms before, during and after pregnancy.

After her first child was born, Suzie decided to write her own guide for those struggling with the decision to have children, or coping with the practicalities of doing so, while dealing with chronic disease. The resulting book is a valuable resource for medical practitioners as well as patients with arthritis and other chronic illnesses.

This book deals in a logical way with the practicalities of preconception, pregnancy and early parenthood, based on Suzie's own inspiring story

as well as those of other arthritis sufferers around the world. Not having a medical background, she avoids making specific comment about medications or medical issues, but stresses the importance of making these decisions with the support and advice of a specialist or GP. Topics covered include considerations when deciding to become a parent; ceasing medications before becoming pregnant; physical and psychological challenges of ceasing medications; physical, emotional and mental effects of pregnancy; the postbirth flare of arthritis symptoms; looking after your own physical, emotional and mental health; feeding; and other aspects of parenting in the first year.

General practitioners will find this an important resource which will improve their own understanding of the everyday challenges facing chronic disease sufferers and help them advise and support patients. It is a useful book to lend or recommend to patients with chronic illness, to help them make decisions and deal with the practical aspects of parenthood.

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