

ICU professionals understand the power of software tools such as database packages and fourth generation languages (4GL's) so they don't have to waste their time learning to program.

Despite the numerous program examples the book also does not include common critical care applications such as CAI (computer-aided instruction), signal analysis (analog-to-digital conversion) and drug interaction software. Also, although a glossary is useful in a book of this type, some of the definitions are not accurate and could be confusing to the novice e.g., "real time – time of the real world ... if a computer does something at noon every day, it must know the real time".

This book could not be recommended as a "practical approach" to microcomputers in critical care, but could serve as an introduction to computers for those working in an ICU.

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Decision making in critical care

Hillary Don, MD B. C. Decker Inc., Burlington, Ontario (Mosby Times Mirror, Scarborough, Ontario) \$54.50

This 205-page hard cover volume is the most recent addition to the Clinical Decision Making series produced by the same publisher.

The author lists 196 emergent and semi-emergent situations, most of which are commonly encountered in the Intensive Care Unit or the Emergency Room. Headings are separated by organ system and are presented in a two page format with a one page decision tree and an informative one page text.

Topics are relevant and the range is fairly comprehensive. The decision trees and complementary text with a few exceptions are clear and well referenced. A few of the decision trees skip obvious steps such as the approach to the patient on intermittent positive pressure ventilation with suddenly elevated peak respiratory pressures and hypoxaemia. Here there is no mention of immediately increasing the FiO_2 or manual ventilating while trouble-shooting the ventilator circuit. A few of the decision trees, such as Cardiac Arrest Part 2 already require some revision. Overall the book is well

written and achieves its objectives as a quick reference for the inexperienced physician facing a potentially life-threatening situation. This book should be particularly useful for the junior resident attached to an intensive care unit, emergency room officers and physicians with part time clinical responsibilities and limited formal training in critical care or emergency medicine.

Acceptance of this book would probably be greater if the format were changed to a soft cover pocket sized volume. Frequent updating will be required to maintain its relevance and encourage widespread use.

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Erratum

Re: *Milne B, Cervenka FW, Henderson MB, Westra PJ*. Transducer offset by electrocautery resulting in erroneous blood pressure measurement. *Can Anaesth Soc J* Vol 33, March 1986. Pages 234–6.

Page 236: "At 10 volts the offset was . . ." should read
"At 100 volts the offset was . . ."
