The ECG Workbook (2nd Ed)

Angela Rowlands, Andrew Sargent, 2011, M & K publishing
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M & K are a UK based company who have been leading the field in professional healthcare development and education for over 16 years. They offer short courses and have recently established a growing catalogue of books. The books provide evidence based, value for money texts for healthcare professionals including physiotherapists.

The ECG workbook is a well designed book with easily accessible information on how to interpret ECGs. This little book is a gem which would be readily suitable for those physiotherapists working in acute and critical care who need to be able to readily interpret ECGs. Whilst the core of the text focuses primarily on the interpretation of 12 lead ECGs, the principles of examining the ECG rhythm strip are presented at the beginning of the text and are readily applicable to the 3 or 5 lead ECGs more often used by physiotherapists.

Chapters 1 – 6 focus on the basics of ECG interpretation such as the electrical conduction of the heart, developing a systematic approach to rhythm strip analysis. This includes chapters on and common arrhythmias and ectopics and extrasystoles. These chapters should suffice for the junior physiotherapist who requires a working knowledge of cardiac arrhythmias for their day to day clinical practice.

Chapters 7 – 12 focus on the interpretation of the 12 lead ECG which will be of use to those physiotherapists working in coronary care units and cardiac rehabilitation. The additional diagnostic information to be gained by the 12 lead ECG is presented, followed by a chapter on axis deviation, chamber enlargement and bundle branch blocks. Especially useful for cardiorespiratory physiotherapists are the chapters that cover the changes seen with the different types and locations of myocardial injury, ischemia and infarction.

To enhance learning, self assessment activities follow every chapter. 'Remember boxes' and plenty of useful diagrams enhance the user friendliness of the text. High quality simulated and real patient ECG recordings are used frequently throughout the text and add ease and value to the interpretation. The text size is similar to that of a 12 lead ECG making the interpretation of the strips seem real.

I would strongly recommend that inpatient physiotherapy departments and therapists engaging in outpatient cardiac rehabilitation have access to this text. It is highly readable, the information contained within it is easily accessible and, for all grades of physiotherapist it is simple and easy to understand.

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Lippincott's Illustrated Review of Neuroscience

Claudia Krebs, Joanne Weinberg, Elizabeth Akesson.
Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2011.
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This is the latest title in the series of Lippincott's Illustrated Review books. There is a companion website which once logged onto will allow you to read the full text online and have access to an interactive online test. The online test consists of the same set of questions and answers as there are in the book.

The book is not directed at or specific to physiotherapy, rather it is aimed at all medical health professionals. It provides a detailed and up-to-date overview of neurophysiology and neuroanatomy relating to the human body. There are many simple and easy to read illustrations throughout the book which are aided by good explanations in the text.

The book initially reviews the neurophysiology of the central, peripheral and visceral nervous systems, the spinal cord, brainstem and ascending sensory and descending motor tracks. It then goes into more specific subjects of control of eye movements, innervations of the head and neck and hearing and balance. The neuroanatomy is detailed and describes the cerebral cortex, the thalamus, the visual system, basal ganglia and the cerebellum. Finally the book links it all together with the integration of the motor control, hypothalamus and limbic system, smell, taste and pain. At regular points throughout the book there are also highlighted sections linking what you have just read in the text with its relevant clinical application. This not only kept my interest but gave me a better understanding of why the core text is applicable to me in the medical setting.

Each chapter is set up in the same way giving good bullet points and bold typing the key words to break up the topics. At the end of chapter there is a concise summary and a series of questions/answers designed to test your knowledge of what you have just read. The questions are a useful exercise as they try and pick important points from the chapter and also apply it into a scenario that could happen in the clinical setting.

Neuroscience is not the most easily digested subject to plough through. However, the book is laid out in clear chapters which make it a more manageable subject and not as daunting as some neuroscience texts can be. The book would provide a good foundation or resource text for either the under or post graduate physiotherapist wanting to brush up on or study in more depth their neuroscience.

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