

Adèle Pope

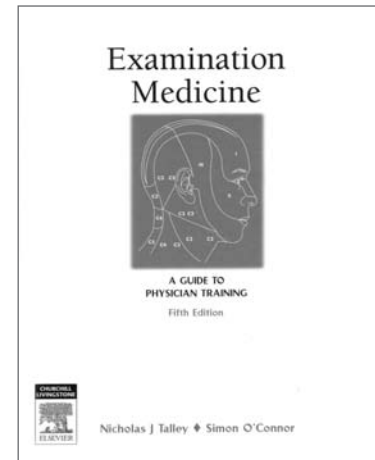
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Adèle is a fourth year Auckland medical student with a research background in cardiovascular disease.

Examination Medicine: A guide to physician training. 5th Edition.
NJ Talley and S O'Connor. Publisher Elsevier

The certainty of death and taxes also holds true for medicine and examinations, but at least it is reassuring to know that Talley and O'Connor will be around to help. These authors have written Examination Medicine for junior doctors and the content includes discussion about sitting post-graduate examinations and long and short cases that are commonly found in hospitals. These cases are also relevant to medical students; after all, the goal of the medical student is to become a doctor. A complementary DVD adds value by demonstrating 10 systems-based physical examinations (PE) (NB: it is the same DVD that comes with Clinical Examination by the same authors).

A large proportion of the book is dedicated to covering 61 long cases that range from common cardiac diseases to pyrexia of unknown origin. Each disease has the following points discussed: the typical history and



questions that should be asked, the relevant PE, a differential diagnosis if valid and then patient management. The management covers both the confirmatory investigations and treatments (with complications). Useful tables are scattered throughout the chapter summarising information such as the common causes of diseases, diagnostic criteria and typical investigation results. The only down-side is a lack of neurological and musculoskeletal type long cases.

The short cases are essentially systems-based PE and do include neurological



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and musculoskeletal systems. There is an underlying assumption that the reader can adequately do all aspects of a PE (given that the book is written for a junior doctor). For each organ system, common PE findings are organised with relevant lists of possible explanations, clinical signs of severity and investigation results. These lists might come in handy when having to answer those annoying on-the-spot questions in the wards. The most recent edition concludes with an imaging chapter that serves as a quick guide for typical chest x-ray and CT results.

Overall this book is easy to read and relevant to medical students. The content is intended to be a guide, not a comprehensive reference, so students will need to go to other text books for more details. Also not every case found in the hospital is going to be covered in this book. Carrying around Examination Medicine on the wards may be useful, for

example, when reminding oneself of the pertinent aspects of an eye examination or when comparing the pros and cons of peritoneal dialysis and haemodialysis. In addition, this book would be ideal for clinical years' exam study if the student likes having topics organised into diseases. One approach to buying and using this book might be to get members of a study group to chip in for a shared study resource and work through each case just like a real doctor.

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Dr Shankar is at present in the Department of Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics, KIST Medical College, Lalitpur, Nepal. He loves small group, interactive teaching and learning and walking the lovely mountains of Nepal.

Crash Course Pharmacology Second edition.
Dawson, Taylor, Reide. Faculty advisor: Clive Page.

Medical science is in the midst of a knowledge explosion. Being a medical student in these changing and challenging times is difficult. Medical schools the world over are switching to an integrated, problem-based system of teaching and learning. The medical curriculum is being restructured to emphasize a core area of knowledge which every student is expected to know and knowledge which the student can access from text books, reference books and the internet. The crash course of pharmacology comes from the crash course series. This series tries to filter out the real necessary basics from the overwhelming pool of knowledge that is accessible to us

The crash course series consists of both Basic Science and Clinical titles. The series is written by medical students under the supervision of a faculty member. The book is primarily intended to serve as a quick and reliable reference and as a supplement to text books. The book is primarily written with the undergraduate medical student in mind but would also be useful to undergraduate dental and nursing students and students of other health professions.

The book is divided into three parts: Principles of Pharmacology, Clinical Pharmacology and Self-assessment. The various topics are covered in a concise and interesting manner. The main section is Part II. This is divided into eleven chapters. These are cancer, infectious diseases, inflammation, pain and immunosuppression, peripheral nervous system, central nervous system, respiratory system, kidney and urinary system, gastrointestinal system, endocrine system and eyes and skin. Comprehension check boxes test understanding of the topics which have been read. Hints and Tips boxes draw attention to key content and helps to remember important points. These boxes are very effective. Simple diagrams and tables help students to comprehend information easily. Each chapter ends with a list of short answer questions. The self-assessment section contains multiple choice questions (MCQs), Short Answer Questions (SAQs) and essay questions. The MCQs are in true-false format and the answers to the MCQs and SAQs are given.

The book has a number of advantages. The system-wise coverage facilitates system-integration across the various subjects. In addition the chapters are covered in a concise fashion and care has been taken to include the latest developments. The index is comprehensive and helps to access

information easily. The book is well produced and its compact size makes it portable. Furthermore the book also advertises an online resource, www.fleshandbones.com (a general medical resource) which will be useful to students and preceptors. The book is manufactured using paper obtained from sustainable forests. This book will be a useful addition to a students' bookshelf.

There are a few disadvantages. The tropical diseases section excepting malaria is not well covered. However, the book was primarily written for British students. The dose and regimens are not covered and will have to be obtained from text books. Cost may be a problem for students from developing countries. There is a tendency among students in South Asia to go in for guides and crash courses and neglect reading text books. This has to be guarded against.

The crash course series of books has been written by medical students under the guidance of faculty mentors to try to provide readers with the real necessary basic information. Though primarily written for the undergraduate medical student it would also be useful to undergraduates of other health professions. The compact, system-wise coverage facilitates system-wise integration across the various subjects. The index is comprehensive and accessible. However, the tropical diseases section excepting malaria is not well covered. The book may be expensive for students from developing countries. I would recommend the book to undergraduate medical and dental students as a supplement to regular textbooks to help the quick assimilation and mastery of information prior to examinations.



Dr Shankar reviews the second edition here but the third edition was published late last year so look out for it in the bookshop.