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EMT Prehospital Care', 4th Edition Mark C Henry, Edward R Stapleton, Dennis C Edgerly (Ed) 2009

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BOOK REVIEW

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'EMT Prehospital Care', 4th Edition

Mark C Henry, Edward R Stapleton, Dennis C Edgerly (Ed),

Mosby JEMS, Elsevier.

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This latest offering for EMTs and Paramedics is a 31 Chapter, 812 page text with accompanying DVD plus review questions and access to a website for further interactive content. It contains 770 illustrations and colour photographs within a very well laid out and easy to read format. The authors are a physician and an EMT-P, and the editor is also an EMT-P, all of whom have hands on experience within the US EMT system and its education institutions.

The text follows a somewhat refreshing and evolutionary developmental approach to EMT care principles as it progresses from the introduction to emergency medical care, through a plethora of disease and trauma presentations, finishing with a specific section on geriatric emergencies.

This book contains some very positive aspects of paramedic practice not normally covered in "manuals" of this type; specifically in the chapters devoted to EMT welfare, manual handling, psychiatric disorders, CBR emergencies and disasters, and HAZMAT emergencies. These chapters provide an insight for the new paramedic into the complexities of the role, as well as providing guidance (rather than procedure) in dealing with situations not normally addressed within anatomy and physiology texts.

The anatomy and physiology chapters are well laid out, with adequate descriptions of processes such as acute coronary syndrome, APO, asthma, head injuries and diabetes. These chapters include good visual displays of anatomy and some processes, with descriptions that would be useful at a Paramedic level, but which may fall short as an adequate reference textbook at the advanced Paramedic level.

The images within this text are noteworthy, as the authors have taken time to gather pictures of such things as jugular distention, intercostal retraction, a variety of trauma photographs, and specific images of such things as bubonic plague, anthrax and mustard gas burns. The chapter on ambulance operations is interesting to read, as it guides the reader through the "starting the car" and "standard equipment" processes of US EMT practice. This section

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provides a comparative aspect of ambulance practice for Australian Paramedics; and while not being specifically relevant to Australian operations, does give insight into the principles of good housekeeping and professional standard development for the student paramedic.

The book also contains a “Bottom Line” section at the end of each chapter, which provides a synopsis of the covered material, and a series of evaluation questions (answered at the end of the book). Each of the practical aspects of patient care, such as defibrillation, intubation, cannulation, etc, are reinforced in a pictorial series to assist the student EMT by visual prompt, which may offer value in learning to some readers.

On the negative side, this book is generally written for US EMTs, and so its relevance to Australian Paramedics requires some degree of interpretation and modification. Whilst the principles of management are essentially the same, there are variances in assessment tools, pharmacological interventions and terminology, specific protocols, health service structures and ambulance service functionality. The sections on communications, documentation and medico-legal/ethical aspects of care are centred within the US EMT scope of practice, but again some useful information may be drawn from these to translate into an Australian model.

Overall, I believe that this text provides value to those Paramedics wishing to review their practice and compare it to a US model, Paramedic students who are seeking variety in their learning tools, or anyone who requires a fundamentally simple and easy to read text which contains all of the basic skills and definitions required for Paramedic practice. I believe that this book falls short of providing a comprehensive study guide for Australian Paramedic students, although its content is not worth dismissing offhand as there is sufficient quality pictorial and descriptive content to use as review material for students and qualified paramedics alike.

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