

BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Manual of Rural Practice. Edited by P. Hutten-Czapski, G. Magee and J. Wootton. November 2006. Society of Rural Physicians of Canada. Hard-cover, 280 pp. Illust. \$49.95 (pre-publication price). ISBN 10: 0-9781620-0-5.

A TEXT FOR ALL SEASONS

As occasionally happens in rural communities, a sunny winter's day turns into a cold and stormy night. The winds blow, and the roads to the city close. As you are awakened, your idyllic dream, with the compelling call of the loon, is now replaced by the reality of the local ambulance siren song. What emergency beckons, to call upon your knowledge, skills and courage? Is it a multiparous patient who has now become breech and is 8 cm dilated? Is it a teen from a multiple motor vehicle collision, who may need a chest tube and advanced airway management to save his or her life?

Especially in situations like this, all rural doctors wish we had a manual of rural practice procedures. Now, the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada has responded and produced just what rural doctors have been looking to find.

The *Manual of Rural Practice* is written for rural doctors, by rural doctors who understand the context of rural practice in which we are called upon to do a wide variety of procedures. These procedures can sometimes be lifesaving, and occasionally are required in stressful, difficult and isolated conditions. The *Manual of Rural Practice* provides clear practical directions for 40 rural practice procedures, ranging from rapid sequence intubation to ingrown toenail removal, with more than 320 illustrations. The articles are adapted in part from the "Occasional" series, published regularly in the *Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine*.

The book is divided into 6 sections:

- Airway (e.g., management, laryngeal mask airway)
- Cardiac/Pulmonary (e.g., arterial lines, chest tube insertion, cardioversion)
- Nervous system (e.g., lumbar puncture, Bier block)

- Integument (e.g., extensor tendon repair, fish hook removal, breast cyst aspiration)
- Musculoskeletal (e.g., Colles' fracture, casting, knee aspiration)
- Genitourinary/Maternity (e.g., shoulder dystocia, suprapubic catheterization)

The format for each procedure is quick and easy to grasp, starting with an equipment list, step-by-step instructions and ending with a procedure summary. The text is clearly written, and the illustrations are helpful.

As with any procedure manual, there are always alternative ways of doing things. For example, many of us now find fibreglass casting has some advantages over the traditional plaster of Paris casting described. The role of air casts is also not described.

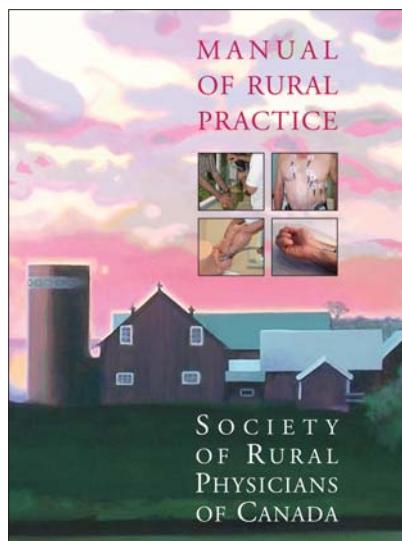
At 280 pages the manual is substantial, but there are many more procedures, such as flexible sigmoidoscopy and procedural sedation, that could have been usefully included. Hopefully the editors will begin work on a second volume. Development of an

electronic version (for hand-held Palm Pilot/iPac, DVD and Web) with demonstration videos of the procedures would be a wonderful complement to the Manual.

This book is especially recommended for both practising rural doctors and rural doctors in training. Every rural hospital and training program should make a copy easily accessible. Rural doctors will also find the equipment lists (there is even an appendix that details part numbers and suppliers) valuable in ensuring that their hospital and clinic procedure rooms have the required equipment readily available when needed.

James Rourke, MD, FCFP(EM), MCLSc

Dr. Rourke, a rural family physician for over 25 years in Goderich, Ont., is now Dean of Medicine at Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Nfld.



For details on where to buy the *Manual of Rural Practice* see back of carrier card or the inside back cover.