

## BOOK REVIEW

### Critical Decisions in Periodontology

4th edition; Edited by WB Hall ISBN 1 55009 184 0;  
Published by BC Decker; 2003 Price £71.99

This book, the fourth edition, and with a change of title from 'Decision Making in Periodontology', is introduced by the editor as appealing to a wide spectrum of dental professionals, at different levels. It is presented in the format of flow diagrams with accompanying text, with two pages facing allotted to each element, and forming sections on periodontal therapy ranging from initial examination to complex therapy. The text is divided into sections, beginning with history taking and developing the whole process of patient management through to such complex issues as aesthetics and periodontal-related procedures including third molar removal. The book is accompanied by a CD, which replicates the chapters and flow diagrams in Acrobat Reader format, therefore allowing for full searching of the text. One would have expected a more interactive format for the CD, and it was disappointing to find that no attempt had been made to inter-relate the written text on the CD with the flow diagrams. For a reader with normal eyesight, only one page is readable at any time, so that the book format is actually easier to use than the electronic data. The CD does however have the advantage of having the ability to allow recall certain areas of study quickly, if a little awkwardly, were the text to be used in revision.

Each element covered in the text is presented with bullet points relating to each part of its relevant flow

diagram. These bullet points are used to enhance the algorithm on that topic. The format has uses in some respects, in that it would act as an *aide memoire* or a quick reference guide to aspects of care, but one is left feeling that the content is unsatisfactory in that it fails to achieve a comprehensive coverage of each element, and does not fully explore the salient points promised. The range of elements covered is lengthy and might be useful for revision, but a sound knowledge of the subject would be necessary to make best use of the facts given. The subjects in the book have been covered by a wide range of teachers, lecturers and practitioners in periodontology who have tried to fulfil their remit of a brief synopsis of their chosen element. This has had various degrees of success, with some algorithms being easier to follow than others. Some of the chapters also have illustrations and these are reproduced with high quality on the CD.

The book would probably not appeal to undergraduates or to auxiliary personnel, despite this being the Editor's intention. It would not be a recommended textbook, but could be used as a supplemental text.

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