
Practical Management of Acute Gastrointestinal Bleeding

by R. J. C. Steele, S. C. S. Chung, and J. W. C. Leung, 148 pp, \$115, ISBN 0-7506-0767-X, Boston, Mass, Butterworth Publishers—Heinemann Medical Books Ltd, 1993.

This book is a concise treatise that covers the origins, diagnosis, and management of the various conditions that cause gastrointestinal tract bleeding. It discusses individual diseases rather superficially, with the exception of their appearance on endoscopy. Diagnostic tools, principles of acute emergency management, and therapeutic maneuvers are covered in depth. The authors are from Hong Kong and the United States, but medical systems, language, and trade names of drugs primarily represent the British system. The book is primarily targeted to gastroenterologists and surgeons, but the introductory portions of each chapter have excellent sections of a general nature that are appropriate for primary care physicians.

The book has nine chapters that address general considerations and the various facets of management specific to the sites of pathologic conditions of the gastrointestinal tract. The initial chapter covers general parameters, including care of the patient in shock, indications for nasogastric tube insertion with or without lavage, methods and sites for intravenous access, and the rationale for multispecialty cooperation and concurrent care. The second chapter is very strong in its coverage of diagnostic endoscopy, particularly in emergency situations.

The next four chapters cover the various general bleeding sites of the gastrointestinal tract. The primary esophageal lesions described are esophageal varices, with an excellent section on the pathophysiology of portal hypertension. The chapter on nonvariceal upper gastrointestinal tract bleeding primarily covers peptic ulcer disease and its pathophysiology. Specific therapeutic maneuvers such as laser photocoagulation of pulsating arterial bleeders are carefully defined in detail. The coverage of colonic bleeding candidly outlines basic precautions and study lim-

itations, with brief descriptions of appearance for each entity. One of the most interesting chapters describes the frustrations and approaches to obscure bleeding. Techniques covered include enteroclysis, angiography, and radionuclide scanning.

There is a separate chapter on the rationale and methods for surgical therapy when needed. The chapter on bleeding in children has a superb section on differential diagnosis for age. Finally, the methods for establishing a hospital unit for gastrointestinal tract bleeding are outlined, including options for equipment.

I have found this book valuable enough to include it in my library, but there are many components in each chapter that meet the needs of specialists rather than generalists.

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