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Sir,

Re: Audit of emergency theatre utilization by Windokun and Obideyi:

Afr. J. Med. med. Sci. (2002) 31: 59-62.

I note with interest the above article in the recent issue of the Journal. The authors concluded that the main reason why emergency surgery was not performed on booked patients was because the surgeons did not show up in 62% of the cases. From the manner in which the study was structured, it was inevitable that they would reach such an erroneous conclusion. However, for a Journal with wide circulation, it is important that the impression from their conclusion should not be left unchallenged.

Surgeons fail to show up when facilities are not available and this could include lack of nursing staff, anaesthetic staff, sterile instruments, oxygen, anaesthetic gases etc. It is obvious that the authors did not fully address all the issues involved to enable effective utilization of an emergency theatre. By actual, I mean when a surgical procedure can in reality be effectively carried out with all materials and relevant staff available. The current practice worldwide is for emergency surgery to be done during daytime period, certainly before 12 midnight. The only exceptions being in critical life-threatening situations!

In contrast to the conclusion of the authors, an increase level of commitment by both the medical and non-medical staff of the Institution will certainly see an improved utilization of the emergency theatre.

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Afr. J. Med. med. Sci. (2002) 31,

Book Review

Muscle Pain-Understanding its: nature, diagnosis and treatment

Editors: S Mense, DG Simons and IJ Russell

Publisher: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins

ISBN: 0-685-05928-9

Hardcover: 385 pages

This book contains gems of information on clinical diseases and syndromes associated with muscle pain. It is authoritatively written and presented in a readable manner as a mixture of basic science and an up-to-date information on the clinical aspects and management of muscle pain. Most of the Chapters contain new concepts based on neuroanatomic and electrophysiological research which provide current information on the neurobiology and pathophysiology of muscle pain. Every one of

the 9 Chapters of this book really comes to life with the clinical sections and the detailed information on drug therapy. This book will definitely help all clinicians involved in pain management achieve a proper understanding of the basic mechanisms of muscle pain and and promote a more effective care of their patients. The book is well illustrated and contains extensive references in every Chapter.

The first 2 Chapters of the book are of general interest and provide information on basic principles pertaining to muscle pain and local pain in muscles. Chapter 3 deals with pain of nerve injury, neuroma, radiculopathy, peripheral neuropathy and the complex regional pain syndrome (otherwise referred to as reflex sympathetic dystrophy). The serious problem posed by pain referred from and to muscles in the diagnosis and treatment of muscle pain is dealt with in Chapter 4. The pain associated with increased muscle tension which includes tension-type headache, painful muscle spasm and muscle stiffness are discussed in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6, the authors deal with reflexly mediated pain and postural muscle pain and they illustrated these with cardiac pain, appendicitis, renal pain, acute pancreatitis, pain and spasm associated with joint disease and muscle, low back pain and postural pain. Chapter 7 deals with central pain and centrally modified pain and the possible central pathways for muscle pain; the clinical conditions described include spinal cord lesions, post-traumatic hyperirritability syndromes, thalamic pain and the interplay of psychological factors. In Chapter 8, the authors draw attention to the importance of muscles in general, and trigger points in particular, as major sources of pain and dysfunction. Important differences between myofascial pain and fibromyalgia, articular dysfunction and occupation myalgias are also discussed.

This book reaches its climax in Chapter, where fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) is discussed as a common medical condition characterized by pain and tenderness to palpation at multiple anatomically defined tissue sites, with in-depth presentation of the clinical picture, the management and drug therapy in FMS. The association between FMS and other clinical conditions including rheumatic disease, chronic infection and endocrine disorders is also well highlighted. A Glossary, which provides terms and definitions as used in the book, will be useful to the readers.

In conclusion, I am of the opinion that this is an excellent book which will be useful to all health-care professionals involved in the clinical management of patients with all kinds of pain. It is a good reference book for the departmental libraries of Surgeons, Physicians, Anaesthetists, and General Medical Practitioners.

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