

have been considered to improve clinical effectiveness, cost effectiveness and appropriateness of orthodontic care in the NHS. The strategy also states that general practitioners require increased understanding of which cases would benefit from treatment and when to refer. These cases would be assessed using IOTN and it will therefore be necessary for GPs to become aware of the use of IOTN. Orthodontic assessment and the use of IOTN will be made a priority for postgraduate education amongst GPs.

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BOOK REVIEW

Understanding Periodontal Diseases: Assessment and Diagnostic Procedures in Practice. By I.L.C. Chapple and A.D. Gilbert. Quintessence Publishing Co., New Malden, 2002 (160pp., £28.00). ISBN 1-85097-053-X

This short book is the first of a series of four titles on Periodontology under the editorship of Professor Iain L.C. Chapple. This series is part of the 36 volume *Quintessentials for General Dental Practitioners* series being published by Quintessence over the next 3 years or so.

The book is concise and well written and each of the 10 chapters has a well defined aim, outcome and comprehensive list for further reading. Chapter 1 gives a contemporary review of the anatomical and microanatomical features of the periodontium and defines the terminology that is used throughout the book. Current views on the role of plaque as the causation of disease are explored in the next chapter and the concept of plaque as a biofilm is described. Shifts in the microbial balance of the biofilm and its relationship to different periodontal

disease processes are concisely reviewed. It is in this area that there has probably been the biggest change in periodontal thinking over the last few years and the complex subject is very clearly explained. The role of the host defence systems and their relationship to the progress of periodontal disease is explored next and from this the basis of risk assessment is developed. A careful explanation is given of the difference between risk markers and disease activity markers and these are well classified into those that are patient-based, mouth-based and individual site-based. The natural history and clinical signs of periodontal diseases are discussed and a critical review of current classification of periodontal diseases is given. From this the concept of the Screening Examination, the Detailed Examination, Radiographic Examination and Special Tests are described in detail but with a most practical basis to it. Leading from this the final chapter on Periodontal Diagnosis and Prognosis draws all the preceding chapters together.

There is great emphasis in all chapters on the need for thorough and accurate recording of data in patient's records and the need to arrive at a diagnosis. A criticism could be made

of the Special Tests chapter that it does not include an evaluation of the more recent DNA-based Bacterial Profiles. Tests available for genetically determined susceptibility are discussed and a very sensible conclusion on the lack of general suitability for these is reached. The author really considers these more advanced tests to belong in referral practice. This book is aimed at the enthusiastic General Practitioner who wishes to keep up-to-date on the background to current periodontal thinking and to make clear decisions on which patients to refer. Great stress is laid on the need to refer patients early enough to allow effective treatment by a Specialist and on the dangers of management by neglect.

All in all, this is an excellent and much needed book which, in the reviewer's opinion should be compulsory reading for all practitioners sitting MFDS or MFGDP. The further titles in the series are awaited with interest and, if they follow the standard of this book, will do much to improve periodontal care of patients.

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