

review

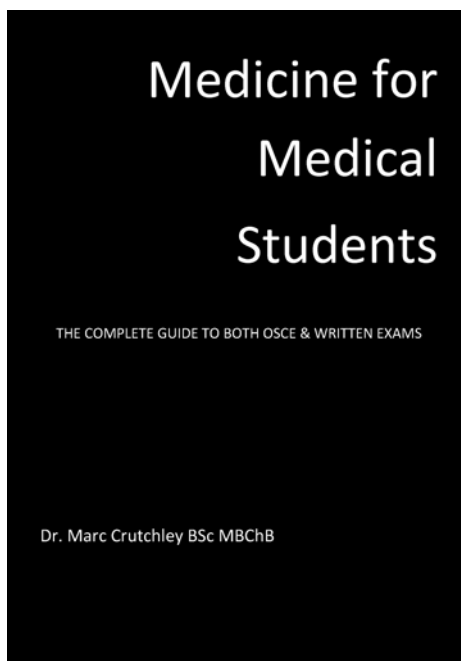
Medicine for Medical Students

Dr. Marc Crutchley has attempted something quite interesting with *Medicine for Medical Students*, something quite interesting indeed. On reading the front cover, a stressed medical student cannot help but be tantalised by the tagline "The complete guide to both OSCE and written exams", a feeling further bolstered by the book's unimposing thickness and weight. Could something so relatively short and light be so complete? Its stark black and white cover screams simplicity, hinting at an author who might just have the refreshing and straight-to-the-point approach medical students crave from revision material.

At first glance, it does not appear to be your average revision text, sticking as it does to one font and one colour, and very few diagrams. In fact, one could be forgiven for thinking that this was merely a set of printed, personal notes with an ISBN number on the back. However, on deeper inspection, it becomes clear that considerable thought has been given to the content and layout. Dr. Crutchley has made every effort to trim down what is a huge amount of information into bite sized chunks of hearty medical knowledge, without losing those really vital parts. A masterstroke is his division of topics into the three areas *History*, *Examination* and *Revision*, making targeted reviewing of each of these areas for specific exams easy and useful. Most chapters of the book can be read properly in 30 minutes to an hour, making breaks painless and practical to take, and re-reads less daunting.

The danger with textbooks such as these, is that the stressed medical student sees it as a substitute for any kind of real work, renouncing all other resources. I would warn that this book is no substitute for involved study and it would be quite confusing if the topic was new. As a reminder of a topic that has been covered thoroughly before, it is invaluable, particularly with a view to examinations.

OSCEs and the Progress Test are the bane of most Manchester medical students. I am sure, like me, you have often thought there is so much to remember and so little time. How do you get all those notes, lectures, books and handouts to stay in your head? Well, usually, you don't, and you go in to the exams with what you think you need to know. Sometimes this works, and sometimes it doesn't. Last year, for instance, it didn't work for me – I didn't quite know what I needed to know and scored a gut-wrenching, heart-rending unsatisfactory grade in



the summer progress test. I was distraught, and I was unable to fathom what exactly went awry. For this year's winter Progress Test, I had to get back into that comfortable satisfactory zone, and in order to do that I needed to know what I needed to know.

I am not exaggerating when I say that Dr. Crutchley's text book "Medicine for Medical Students" made up a significant part of my revision in the weeks leading up to the exam. It helped me cover a great swathe of medical knowledge quickly, easily and logically so that significant knowledge-holes could be swiftly identified and fixed. Due to its trimmed, simple nature, I was only covering areas that would almost certainly prove useful – that all-important core knowledge – and I was remembering it. My progress test mark leaped back up to satisfactory.

This book is not for everyone but most medical students will find it an invaluable resource in their revision armoury. Moreover, I would argue that it is unique in its position as an accessible means of revising usefully for the Progress Test, something I know many find impossible.

James Anderson is a 4th Year Medical Student and a co-editor of Mediscope

Visit www.themedicalstudent.com to find out how to get a copy or contact Dr. Marc Crutchley directly at info@themedicalstudent.com