

OSCES for the MRCOG Made Easy Vol. 2

Editor **A Alexander Taylor**

This 68-page, pocket-sized, easy-to-follow course book, along with the interactive DVD, should be a welcome addition to the growing revision aids for the OSCE component of the MRCOG exam. Those who find OSCEs an 'artificial' or 'drama' situation and find it hard to focus on practising for the exam seriously, will find that this interactive DVD and booklet help to make it feel real.

The section on troubleshooting for effective communication in stressful exam times is worth paying heed to as good communication skills form the backbone of a successful consultation. The topics covered are comprehensive and include common clinical scenarios such as heavy menstrual bleeding, postpartum stress incontinence and initial consultation of the infertile couple, as well as sensitive and difficult areas like domestic violence and counselling after operative complications, which will no doubt give clear direction to practice for the OSCEs.

Although sometimes it appears all too well rehearsed in the easier scenarios, it becomes clear by the 'pass' and 'fail' examples as to how a careful choice of words, accountability, empathy and apology, where appropriate, can rescue a difficult consultation with an angry or aggressive patient. The experienced examiner in the structured vivas highlights the fact that examiners are trained not to

give leads or useful eye contact and therefore to try and think aloud and make suggestions to move on if things are not moving fast in any one aspect. These are vital hints to maximise your chances of success, which depends solely on meaningful utilisation of those all-important 15 minutes in each station.

Being mindful of the marks distribution, key points on the topics with remarks on common mistakes will help candidates to steer the consultations in the right direction. The format of the book emphasises that the knowledge and communication skills expected in OSCEs are really those of a reasonably skilled and safe obstetrician and gynaecologist in everyday clinical practice.

Overall, the book and the DVD are user-friendly, easy to follow and definitely worth the investment for OSCE preparation, especially as they can be used at one's own convenience. Although it has to be emphasised that there is no alternative to practising as many and as varied scenarios as possible with a study partner, this book/DVD will help point you in the right direction.

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