

Book review**Fatherhood in Midwifery and Neonatal Practice**

Kevin Hugill and Merryl Harvey
 Quay Books, 2012
 ISBN: 978-1-856424-301
 £24.99, paperback



Traditionally, midwifery and neonatal research has been centred on the mother, creating an imbalance on available research-based evidence that pertains to the needs and experiences of fathers during childbirth and early years. However, in the past ten years this imbalance has begun to swing in favour of fatherhood research, particularly in the neonatal environment. This book is a timely addition to parenting literature at, and around, the time of birth. It is unique in that it introduces the pivotal role of fathers in parenting, beginning with the healthy pregnancy and well newborn infant through to fatherhood in a neonatal unit.

The back cover states that the book is an invaluable support for practitioners promoting the involvement of fathers

during childbirth and early childhood. I would add that it is a very suitable addition to any university or NHS healthcare library that supports resources for medical, midwifery, health visiting, social work and neonatal training.

As a neonatal lecturer, I would certainly use this book as a valued teaching tool. The authors, both passionate researchers on the topic, have not sacrificed the need to present research evidence, theoretical perspectives and debates in support of their arguments and ideas. However, any 'dryness' that may seem apparent in some of the theoretical chapters is quickly dispelled by the inclusion of key points, case histories and reflective points that return the reader back to the rationale for the book – to inform, guide and challenge

practice, beliefs and attitudes. The final reflective activity seeks to engage the reader with their personal biography of experiences of being fathered – a good place to start when engaging students in understanding parenting perspectives.

One caveat would be that the book is very much written from a UK perspective, particularly when drawing upon political agendas and other drivers. A comprehensive book of this type, if widened to include perspectives from Europe, Canada, USA, Australia and New Zealand for example, would be a welcome addition to international literature on the topic. Finally, it may be useful in future editions to include a perspective on fathers as part of a family system, with more discussion on the potential supportive role of grandparents when parenting a child with complex needs – this may encompass the reality of parenting in the 21st century and a return to multigenerational family living.

Liz Crathern
Neonatal Lecturer
University of Sheffield



21st Annual International Neonatal Conference and Ventilatory Workshop Middlesbrough, UK

Thursday 6 to Saturday 8 June 2013

Durham University, Queen's Campus, Stockton on Tees, Teesside, UK

Pre-conference "Advanced Ventilatory Workshop" Thursday 6 June 2013

Annual International Neonatal Conference – Friday 7 – Saturday 8 June 2013

Topics include: Advances in Neonatology: Triumphs and Tragedies • 2012: The Year in Review • Neonatal Respiratory Care: Current Concepts and Challenges • Neonatal Nutritional Practices: Newer Concepts and Strategies • Necrotising Enterocolitis: Is it Preventable? • Neonatal Neurology and Brain Protection: Can We Do More? • Neonatal Renal Failure and Congenital Renal Anomalies • Retinopathy of Prematurity: State of the Art • Early Fluid Management in Preterm Infants: Weighing the Evidence • Neonatal Haemodynamics and Cardiac Assessment • Controversies, Conundrums and Pearls of Wisdom in Neonatal Medicine

Registration and fees: Advanced Ventilatory Workshop & Annual Neonatal Conference £480 (3 days). Annual Neonatal Conference £360 – 2 days, £180 1 day. Advanced Ventilatory Workshop £220 (1 day).

For an application form, please contact

Conferences and Courses Department, Academic Division, The James Cook University Hospital,
 Marton Road, Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW

Telephone 01642 282534, Fax 01642 282535, Email nicky.robinson@stees.nhs.uk

Or apply online: www.neonatalconference.co.uk