

OAKES' RESPIRATORY HOME CARE: AN ON-SITE

REFERENCE GUIDE *Reviewed by Michael McPeck BS RRT FAARC*



Oakes' series of pocket-size reference books just grew larger with the addition of Respiratory Home Care: An On-Site Reference Guide. Like all the books in this series, this one is about the size of a lab coat pocket, by design. It is an inch or so thick, and contains 280 pages in a small green loose leaf binder. The hallmark of the Oakes' series of pocket guides is the concise layout and unadorned presentation of facts and figures. This book is definitely not a text book and definitely not a "how to" guide. The underlying presumption of these guide books is that the practitioner already has training and experience in the subject at hand, but may occasionally need a handy fact or a concise figure. Despite its destiny as a reference source, I found that perusing the book jogged my memory and refreshed my recall of concepts that I had not recently mentally reviewed and were therefore becoming somewhat cloudy.

Out of necessity, the content of this book borrows heavily from Oakes' other books, which is neither surprising nor a problem. After all, many of the factual underpinnings of respiratory home care are the same as those in acute care, pediatrics and provision of mechanical ventilation. So, although some of the material is recycled, it is presented in the context of respiratory home care. This book also borrows heavily from the AARCs Clinical Practice Guidelines and uses them to good advantage whenever they can shed light on the subject matter. Other than the obligatory citation of the source of AARC CPGs, and other "public domain" guide-

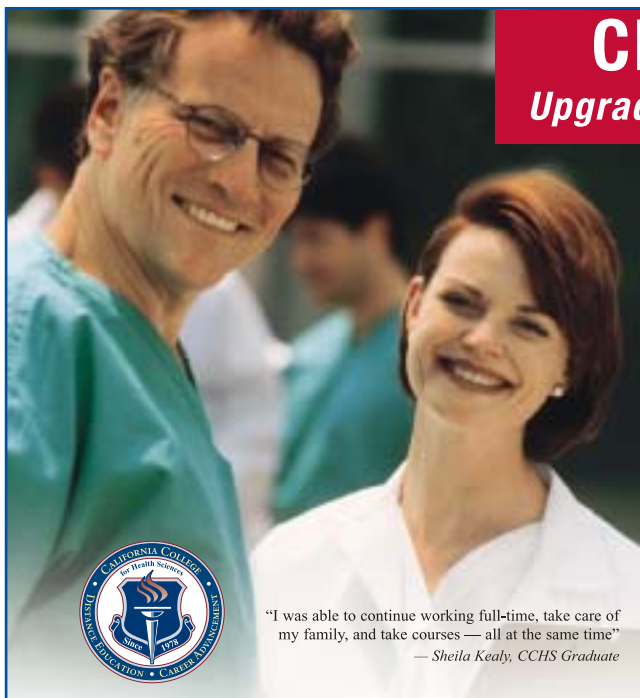
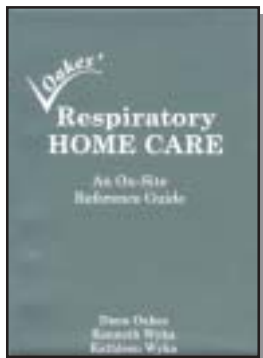
lines, one area the book does not address well is the citation of references for all the various facts and figures it exudes. However, I suspect that if all the data and information were comprehensively referenced, the book would no longer fit in one's pocket and its utility

as an "on site" reference would quickly wane. Lack of referencing is a necessary compromise.

Let us now turn our attention to the content. There are 19 chapters; some are clinical, some are not. I can't mention them all in this limited space, but I will comment on few that are particularly relevant. Chapter 1 discusses Discharge Planning, a logical first step toward respiratory home care. The chapter concisely outlines candidates for respiratory home care, goals of such care, patient selection criteria and the major elements of the discharge plan, discharge plan team makeup and responsibilities and specific responsibilities of the RT. There is

a reference table showing cardiorespiratory conditions typically treated in the home care environment along with a list of diagnostic, therapeutic, supportive and life support modalities that can be performed in the home. For those who may be involved in establishing the RT role in discharge planning, the chapter reprints relevant aspects of the AARC and ATS position statements on home care, plus a flowchart

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demonstrating the logical steps in the discharge planning process. Chapter 2 addresses both initial and subsequent home visits with respect to the purpose and goals of such visits. A table lists the myriad environmental aspects the practitioner should be assessing during visits including fundamental safety, electrical suitability, fire risks and safety as well as whether the environment is "healthy." A note about the cultural and lifestyle differences the practitioner may encounter in visiting different homes is a nice touch.

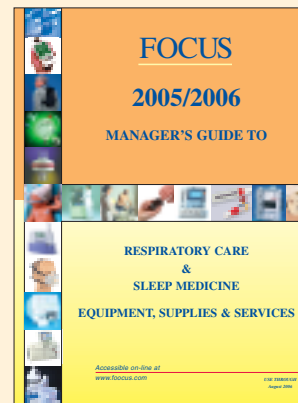
Chapter 3 is all about Patient Assessment. This is an area where RT skills are sometimes in need of improvement. Covered topics include the health history, general physical assessment, specific respiratory assessment, plus data regarding cardiovascular, fluid and electrolytes, neurological and physical limitations assessment. Hopefully, the material in the chapter will serve as good "look up" data, but it can not replace basic skills and experience. Unfortunately, the chapter only devotes one small table on half a page to the aspects of psychosocial assessment. Given the major impact of psychosocial factors on the home care patient, this is an area that should be expanded in subsequent editions of this book.

Chapter 4 regards Oxygen Therapy and contains a great deal of technical material that the hospital-based therapist rarely has to contend with but which is standard daily fare in home care. This includes the legal aspects and eligibility requirements of the oxygen prescription (for reimbursement purposes), plus the different types of oxygen sources for the home environment (cylinders, liquid, and concentrators), characteristics of different administration devices (including conservers) and a variety of calculations and formulas for inspired oxygen prediction and running time of various types of cylinders. A section on traveling with oxygen lists many points to be considered during the planning phase for trips by car, train, ship or airplane. Chapter 5 is about Aerosol Therapy and is essentially unremarkable inasmuch as nearly all the material presented is already within the command of most RTs. Although proper usage technique is listed in the chapter's tables, I would have liked to have seen more attention paid to the well-known compliance problems many home care patients have with proper use of their aerosol delivery equipment. If there was ever an area where the home care therapist should try to make a difference, this is it. Unfortunately, this chapter does not aide the therapist in that regard.

Chapter 9 discusses Airway Management and includes, not unexpectedly, a great deal of concise information about tracheostomy tubes, equipment, complications, speaking valves, cuff care, stoma care and suctioning procedures for both adults and children. Chapter 10, on Mechanical Ventilation, attempts to distill a very broad subject into the facts and features relevant to home care. It discusses both conventional mechanical ventilation and non-invasive ventilation and includes guidelines for choosing methods, selecting equipment, managing the patient and applying techniques in the home. Chapter 11 deals with Sleep Therapy and just barely scratches the surface of this complex emerging specialty. Chapter 12 briefly addresses Apnea Monitoring in infants. It includes definitions of the various types of apnea and the elements of a home monitoring program. Generic procedures for setting up and maintaining an apnea monitor are included along with a flow diagram for assessing and infant and responding to physical signs and features of apneic episodes.

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Infection Control is the subject of Chapter 16 and, as is pointed out at the beginning of the chapter, there are no specific guidelines available for home infection control. Much of what is recommended for the home is adapted from hospital guidelines, taking into account the various limitations of the home environment. Chapter 17 involves Education, Training and Compliance. There is some useful information here, particularly as it involves patient teaching strategies and patient compliance. I believe that most people who work in home care will tell you that the practitioner's effectiveness as a teacher and a communicator is much more important than using the latest piece of equipment. But this is such a key issue in the difference between success and failure in home care that I would have liked to have seen this area expanded, even at the expense of other chapters whose information is readily available elsewhere. Chapter 18 is about Reimbursement. Obviously, it is a complex topic and one that the effective home care practitioner needs to fully understand. Unfortunately, this chapter is really concise, too concise, perhaps. Reimbursement is so fundamental to home care that one might have thought that more attention could have been paid to it. Finally, Chapter 19, entitled Accreditation and Other Rules, closes out the book with a brief overview of the JCAHO and other accreditation processes to the extent that they affect home medical equipment and home health care providers. A short overview of HIPPA requirements closes out the chapter.

The home care therapist has to think quickly and act decisively and does not have the support structure of all the hospital's resources for backup. This book has the potential to support the home care therapist and is a reasonable step toward that goal. However, I would have liked to have seen a little less regurgitation of material that is readily available in other sources in order to make room for other relevant material, such as a greater emphasis on home care troubleshooting. For example, a list of typical equipment problems a home care therapist might encounter, the top 10 home care respiratory diseases and the special challenges they present, or maybe some additional flowcharts for problem solving. All in all, I believe the book does a creditable job of providing a concise overview of respiratory home care and should be helpful to those who practice in that environment.