

## Book review

# Integrated care pathways: a practical approach to implementation

*Edited by Sue Middleton and Adrian Roberts,  
Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2000, pp. 224,  
ISBN 0 7506 4087 1*

The modern health care developments are challenged by the pressure for improved quality of care. Patients are increasingly sophisticated consumers of health care and have correspondingly high expectations, placing greater demands on busy health professionals. In this context, there are currently a number of initiatives aimed at improving a quality of health care and meeting the expectations of consumers. Integrated Care Pathways (ICPs) can be seen as one essential way to achieve positive results in this respect. ICPs is an outline or a plan of anticipated clinical practice for a group of patients (client group) with a particular diagnosis or a set of symptoms.

*Integrated Care Pathways—A Practical Approach to Implementation* is a practical guide to the development, implementation and evaluation of ICPs, written by authors who have an understanding and experience of using care pathways in clinical practice.

It provides a multidisciplinary template of the plan of care, assisting in the process of better coordination between different levels of care, and leading to the desired objective.

The book is developed in three major parts, which present the problems of the 'essence', the 'rationale for', and the 'way of introducing' the ICPs. It explains the concept of care pathways—from initial idea through to working model. It focuses on the use of ICPs to facilitate multidisciplinary involvement in patient care; highlights potential pitfalls and advises on how to overcome them to ensure successful operation of care pathways. A useful set of Appendices with concrete clinical examples provides a practical tool for setting up your own ICPs.

The authors explain how to use ICPs to deliver appropriate patient care in a team environment and describe the relationship between ICP and Clinical Governance. The introduction of Clinical Governance has led to increased interest in ICPs as the tool by which nationally defined guidelines and standards can be made locally applicable, leading to continuous quality improvement.

The book explores a rather new topic of study and brings substantial contribution to knowledge that is existing in the field. It provides an excellent basis for anyone wanting to know how to make ICPs work. This gives me the pleasure to strongly recommend it.

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