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How to Read an EKG

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Book Reviews

How to Read an EKG (3rd. cd.), Margaret G. Blowers and Roberta Smith Sims.

Medical Economics, Inc. , **Oradell**, New Jersey, 1984, 58 pp.

How to Read an EKG provides a well organized and well written overview of basic electrocardiograms (EKGs). The book will assist all health care workers to learn basic knowledge of electrocardiograms.

The text is divided into five sections: electrode application, lead placement, electrocardiographic monitoring and common problems, normal EKG, non-catastrophic and life-threatening arrhythmias and treatment. Illustrated diagrams of the electrical activity of the heart and sample EKG patterns are presented to assist the reader in differentiating between simple and potentially dangerous cardiac problems.

Faculty members and students may criticize the book for omission of objectives, summaries, questions, and references at the end of each section. In addition, skill check sheets are not included for student practice and final performance evaluation. The title of the book could be changed to reflect more closely the content, possibly, "The Basic EKG."

Strengths of the book include the glossary, safety factors, sample EKGs, and a table for determining heart rate. This format enables students to obtain some background and experience and to learn to recognize many life-threatening arrhythmias so that appropriate treatment can be initiated. Also, the book may be used as a flip chart placed in an EKG monitoring area for quick comparison of model rhythm strips with patients' tracings.

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