

Obstetric, Neonatal, and Gynecologic Care

A Practical Approach for Indian Health September 2003



*prepared for
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prepared by



*The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Women's Health Care Physicians*

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PREFACE

Obstetric, Neonatal, and Gynecologic Care is written as a practical guide for Indian Health Service (IHS) and Tribal physicians and nurses who provide primary care to women and infants. It may also be useful as a guide to care in other rural and remote health care settings which have similar geographic, socioeconomic, access, staffing, funding, and organizational patterns. We presume that the persons finding most use for the book will be generalists (i.e., family practitioners) and not specialists (i.e., obstetrician-gynecologists or pediatricians) and that there will be formally designated backup consultative services available to them in these and other areas. Likewise, it is assumed that most of the users of this guide will be practicing medicine and nursing in Level 1 institutions or in low-risk maternity units, yet will have the need to transfer sick pregnant women and distressed infants to appropriate level secondary or tertiary care centers as part of a formalized regional perinatal referral system. The providers in the primary Service Units are not likely to have the latest high-technology diagnostic and therapeutic techniques or extensive support staff available, but the basic tools of the trade should be there, along with clearly established options of consultation and referral, as necessary.

Because primary care providers in such IHS, Tribal, or other rural or remote settings tend to be isolated geographically due to the very nature of their locations, the editor and authors have attempted to foster very specific, independent actions on the part of the practitioners by suggesting detailed courses of action to be taken at least in the early stages of their patients' diseases or problems. However, the emphasis is on prophylactic, preventive medicine and health promotion, with use of risk assessment, screening tests, and early intervention techniques. In high-risk or emergency situations, the emphasis is on stabilization and preparation for transport. The problem of deciding when to call for consultation and/or transport is frequently and specifically addressed with suggestions throughout the text.

Each chapter or subheading attempts to define a problem, state its significance, present some basic concepts or explain the major pathophysiologic mechanisms underlying the condition, list the most helpful diagnostic signs, symptoms, and laboratory results, present a detailed management plan, and state the likely outcome and follow-up needed. Alternative or controversial management issues are largely avoided in order to provide a clear, singular approach to therapy. However, we do not wish to imply that there is only one acceptable way of doing things or that the approach set forth in this reference carries the weight of formal ACOG, IHS, or Tribal policy.

This reference text began as a workbook to accompany the lecture material presented at a workshop in maternity, newborn, and gynecologic care for new physicians and nurses in IHS and Tribal programs. The editors and authors have expanded on that material and given it a generally uniform format for better visualization and data discovery. We consider this to be an ongoing process and thus plan to expand into new areas as well as to periodically update the presently-included material in this practical guide. Of particular note, IHS policy is defined in the IHS Manual, Chapter 13, whereas this reference text is intended to serve only as a practical guide to clinical care.

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Please note that throughout this Guide, except as otherwise specified,

*** indicates: FURTHER EVALUATION AND/OR REFERRAL TO
A QUALIFIED OBSTETRICIAN-GYNECOLOGIST IS
RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER MANAGEMENT.**