

Book Review:

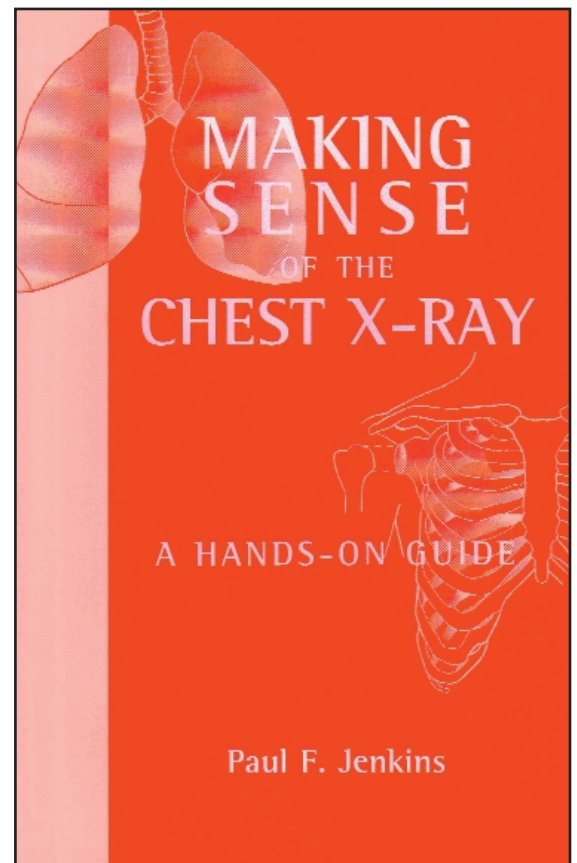
“Making Sense of the Chest X-ray, a hands-on Dr Paul Jenkins, Hodder Arnold Press 2005

Sangeetha Sundaram & Stephen Harden

The chest radiograph is one of the most challenging images to interpret reliably, yet accurate film reading can be very rewarding professionally and can significantly improve patient management. These skills are important for all professionals working in acute medicine and acquiring them requires a comprehensive book collection and a wide experience but above all a good teacher.

“Making sense of the Chest X-ray” is an excellent book written by a clinician who is clearly an outstanding teacher. The book teaches a systematic approach to the chest x-ray so that all of the information available can be gathered. The chapters are predominantly problem-orientated, with headings including ‘consolidation, collapse and cavitation’, ‘mediastinal and hilar shadows’, and ‘pleural disease’, thus enabling the clinician to find the relevant point of reference rapidly. It is clear and concise and the majority of the images are of a very high quality. There are regular reminders to consider the x-ray in the clinical context of the patient and useful warnings of potential hazards. In addition the text is highlighted at regular intervals by boxes containing ‘Thinking Points’ as well as ‘Pearls of Wisdom’, such as the value of turning the x-ray on its side to look for rib fracture. The book provides a reliable way of distinguishing different types of lung abnormality to refine a differential diagnosis but also stresses the need to think laterally as simple pattern recognition will not always provide the answer.

This book is very much an introduction to the art of chest x-ray interpretation and will not necessarily replace the need for a large book collection (or a good radiologist). However, it is surprisingly comprehensive given its size and would fit easily into a white coat pocket, if anyone still wears one!



While this book will be most valuable for those healthcare professionals working in Emergency Departments and in Acute Medicine, it would also be useful for those working in any specialty in which chest x-rays are requested on a regular basis. For a reliable approach to safely and accurately interpreting chest x-rays, this very readable book is highly recommended.

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