

must have also recognized this need in their practices, for their new book is useful for such searches. They also recognized that owing to their comprehensiveness, such texts cannot emphasize ambulatory care of the elderly. According to the foreword by Dr T. Franklin Williams, the aim of the new book is to fulfill this need in the geriatric literature: addressing "the aspects of care as seen when the older person comes to her or his doctor's office or a clinic with everyday questions and problems." In 572 readable pages, the editors and contributors do just that, and quite successfully.

The editors have assembled a variety of contributors, both internist-geriatricians and family physician-geriatricians, from institutions throughout the United States recognized for excellence in geriatric care and research.

The book contains 56 chapters and is divided into four sections: Principles of Ambulatory Geriatric Care; Assessment; Prevention and Health Maintenance; and Common Geriatric Syndromes and Problems. Each chapter begins with "Key Points" (several sentences that summarize the content) and ends with references and suggested readings.

The first chapter is, appropriately, "Goals of Care," which emphasizes the weakness of the traditional "fix-it" medical model in the care of the older patient and argues that seeking the best outcome for each patient is preferred. The remainder of the first section deals with different sites and concerns of outpatient geriatric care, including the office, home, rehabilitation, medication use, nursing and social work, advance directives, and financial concerns. All of these are brief reviews that will aid practitioners.

Assessment is discussed in the next section. In particular, the chapter "Office Assessment Tools" is a helpful approach to the difficult task of assessing geriatric patients in a busy office practice. Common instruments suitable to office prac-

tice are reviewed. Examples repeatedly demonstrate the usefulness of functional assessment in the care of the elderly. I learned the most from discussions of problems that are often missing from other sources, such as preoperative assessment, driving evaluation, safety in the home, and hearing assessment. The discussion on outpatient evaluation for nursing home admission demonstrates the pitfalls of approaching this task as merely paperwork instead of a complete evaluation of the patient.

In addition to the usual review of preventive interventions recommended for the elderly, the next section discusses successful aging, nutritional assessment, and exercise. The chapter "Social and Spiritual Contributors to Independence" gives examples of these types of interventions that are often overlooked by physicians but may have profound effects on their patients.

Part 4 reviews common geriatric syndromes and problems concisely, while providing current treatment strategies. These succinct reviews may be skimmed while the patient is in the office, which, in my mind, is the true test of any book purporting to be useful in busy office practices. A large range of problems are covered, from sexual dysfunction to falls to headache to weakness. The content and writing are even between the chapters. Once again, practical aspects are emphasized (appropriately) over research questions. Every chapter gave me at least one suggestion for one of my patients.

This book is exceptionally free of mistakes. The index is useful, the tables add information without overwhelming the reader, and the typeface and layout are simple but pleasing. Photographs are included in the chapters on common skin problems and on oral problems.

This is a remarkable paperback. I recommend it to all practitioners who treat elderly patients in office practice. Indeed, I recom-

mend it as the sole geriatric reference for those who can only afford one geriatric text and desire a readable and practical book.

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Outpatient Care Handbook

by Peter A. Glassman, Daniel Garcia, Judith P. Delafield, 300 pp, \$31, St Louis, Mo, Mosby-Year Book Inc, 1993.

The authors chose 63 problems, disorders, or disease states commonly encountered in the outpatient settings of primary care internists and family physicians. The guidelines described in the protocols are from consensus papers developed by the American College of Physicians, the American Medical Association and its affiliates, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, RAND, and the US Preventive Services Task Force and can be considered authoritative. The authors took license, however, to modify the guidelines based on their personal experience.

Each of the sections provides a definition of the problem, basic general principles, pertinent aspects of history and physical examination findings, results of relevant laboratory and diagnostic studies, management tips, and advice on when to refer to consultants. References are included at the end of each section, as well as an Index of Consensuses. The sections are written in outline form and therefore serve as a useful checklist. The appendixes include growth charts for boys and girls from age 2 to 18 years. There is a relatively extensive index of diseases associated with certain occupations and recommendations on how to take an occupational history. There

are also appendixes on the Mini-Mental Status examination, useful equations, and the Cutaneous Nerve Innervation of the Body.

One of the most practical chapters of this book is the section on medical decision making. Although very brief, it provides an adequate explanation of such terms as sensitivity and specificity of a test, predictive value, and decision making regarding the practical use of a particular test. The section on the critical review of the medical literature is also very helpful and provides an excellent approach to a critique of the literature.

Although portions of this handbook can serve as a useful desk reference for family physicians and internists, the information is available in more complete textbooks (eg, Kelley, Harrison's, Cecil & Loeb). If one seeks a brief discussion or outline approach to common problems, there are better resources, such as Griffith's *The 5 Minute Clinical Consult*.

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Clinical Dermatology: A Color Guide to Diagnosis and Therapy

2nd ed, by Thomas P. Habif, 756 pp, \$123, ISBN 0-8016-2465-7, St Louis, Mo, Mosby-Year Book, 1990.

My initial reaction to this book was, "Wow! This is a powerful tool for practicing family physicians." Looking at skin disorders, distorted nails, and hair problems for over 20 years in private medical practice, I often remarked that medical school and residency training did not adequately prepare me to take care of all these disorders. Over the years, I collected various textbooks and

handbooks on proper diagnoses of skin disorders, dermatological formularies, nail diseases, abnormalities of the hair, and minor office surgical techniques. Never before had I found all of these resources in one textbook for easy reference in the office.

First, on the inside cover of his book, Habif presents an easily understandable outline of the topical corticosteroid creams by listing the potencies of these drugs. Furthermore, this listing is organized by trade names and includes the generic names along with available tube sizes. The second chapter of this book describes the general principles of topical therapy and dressings and answers the following questions. When and how do you use wet dressings for dermatological diseases? What strength of topical steroids do you initially use? How often and for how long do you use the most potent corticosteroid creams? How do you logically calculate the amount of cream to dispense? When and how do you use occlusive wrappings for absorption of topical steroids? The appendix with 35 pages of dermatologic formulary is invaluable. This material also includes information about acne medications, antifungal agents, antiperspirants, hair restoration products, lubricating agents, soaps, sunscreens, and wart medications, among many other categories of therapy. This material can easily replace two or three dermatological formularies presently on my bookshelves.

Subsequent chapters are arranged by the classical method of organizing skin diseases, such as eczema and dermatitis, urticaria, acne and rosacea, and psoriasis. The diagnostic approach to skin diseases not only uses multiple large colorful photographs but is supplemented by descriptions of symptoms, physical findings, and courses of diseases, with multiple tables illustrating differential diagnoses, treatments, and diagnostic criteria.

Some chapters that may be of

special interest to family physicians are "Exanthema and Drug Eruptions," "Connective Tissue Diseases," "Hypersensitivity Syndromes," "Hair Diseases," and "Nail Diseases." For instance, on page 634, there is a table on differential diagnoses for various colors in nails, such as brown, green, yellow, and blue. These facts are fascinating and helpful. There is also information on sexually transmitted bacterial and viral infections. The section on connective tissue diseases was intriguing with its table on autoantibody tests and classification of cutaneous lupus erythematosus. Benign and malignant skin growths are always a challenge for physicians to diagnose and to follow. The illustrations and explanations of these growths are a tremendous aid for primary care physicians.

Finally, I want to compliment the author on his descriptions and illustrations of dermatological surgical procedures. It involves the proper techniques for skin biopsies (punch, shave, or simple excision), electrodesiccation, curettage, cryosurgery, and extraction of cysts. Also, for the reader's understanding of other procedures, there are explanations on Mohs' surgery, dermabrasion, dermal implants, and liposuction. Local anesthesia, hemostasis, and wound healing are also included.

I highly recommend this book for practicing physicians and primary care residents. The skin and its appendages are easily accessible for primary care physicians to observe, diagnose, treat, and follow the course of their disorders. This book makes the journey easier and more intellectually stimulating for the physician. May you take this textbook on your journey as you discover the mysteries of the skin.

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