

Book Reviews

Myofascial Pain and Dysfunction. The Trigger Point Manual. Volume 1: Upper Half of Body. Second edition.

By David G. Simons, Janet G. Travell, and Lois S. Simons. 1038 pp, illustrated. Baltimore, Williams & Wilkins, 1999. \$99 (paper). ISBN 0-683-08363-5.

The Trigger Point Manual is a comprehensive presentation of the anatomy, theory, physical evaluation, and treatment modalities of a very common clinical problem in primary care—the distressingly ubiquitous musculoskeletal pains caused by myofascial trigger points. The authors propose that this condition and source of common aches and pains is frequently overlooked and misunderstood. They appear to be highly successful in the pursuit of their goal by teaching muscle anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, palpation skills, and the awareness and treatment of factors that can perpetuate the trigger point phenomena.

The term *manual* can be misleading here, as the authors stress and certainly offer a lengthy and thoroughly academic approach—not a cookbook for the use of local anesthetic injections. A systematic methodology, including the concept of myofascial pain referral patterns, establishes this volume as providing an overall approach to an intricate area of medicine seen daily in the primary care office.

The first several chapters, 200 pages, offer critical introductory information that serves to bring the reader to a level of preparedness from which to gain optimal advantage from the ensuing sections. The authors include a glossary of terms specifically used in this book; a general overview of the history, theory, physical findings, and approach to the treatment of trigger points; a chapter on general principles of muscle function, dysfunction, and treatment (stretching, pressure, exercises, spraying, icing, injecting); and then a chapter discussing the perpetuating factors of myofascial trigger points (mechanical stresses, nutritional inadequacies, metabolic-endocrine disorders, and psychologic factors).

The remainder of the book is divided into four parts: head and neck pain; upper back, shoulder, and arm pain; forearm and hand pain, and torso pain. Each part then is made up of sections that include an overview of specifics in that region. Especially illustrative of an area primary care physicians face daily is the outstanding work these authors have done with myofascial neck pain. There are numerous excellent diagrams and tables supplementing detained examination techniques of neck muscle syndromes. Subsequent chapters elucidate the specific muscle syndromes of the region (trapezius, sternocleidomastoid, masseter, temporalis, etc) with specific examinations and descriptions of the trigger points along with treatment modalities. Illustrations and helpful anatomic diagrams abound.

The inner cover of the book provides an index of 80 or so muscles commonly affected by trigger points in the upper body. The clinician who is already familiar with myofascial anatomy and therapeutic techniques could use this index to access rapidly the authors' views on a specific muscle pain syndrome, thus enabling a quick review and immediate clinical direction. An extremely valuable feature throughout the text is the application of posture modification and preventative methods for many of the often-encountered muscle pain syndromes.

The Trigger Point Manual is academically comprehensive and detailed and lends itself best to experienced clinicians who have allocated a portion of their practice to the evaluation and treatment of myofascial syndromes. Although this book is readable and precise, the level of detail is such that those studying this text should be prepared to invest generous amounts of time to realize its immense potential benefit. Those who wish to gain a more limited, yet substantial, fundamental knowledge of basic myofascial trigger point medicine can do so by concentrating on the first four chapters.

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Griffith's Instructions for Patients. Sixth edition. By Stephen W. Moore and Jo A. Griffith. 618 pp, illustrated. Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders, 1998. \$55 (paper). ISBN 0-7216-7375-9.

Patient education is obviously an important component of the daily practice of primary care medicine. Patients would clearly benefit from knowing more about their illness, from causes to treatments. It is probably safe to assume, however, that many patients do not remember everything discussed with them at their visit (assuming that matters were discussed). Also, depending on how harried the physician is, he or she might not devote much time to patient education at that particular office visit. Being able to provide a patient with something tangible, in writing, regarding their illness at the close of the office visit would be beneficial.

This paperback is a compendium of patient education materials. The pages are perforated for easy removal for photocopying to distribute to patients. The pages do not need to be removed, however, to be copied. Also, the entire book has three holes on the left side of the pages so that they can be placed in a three-ring binder if desired. The information provided is generally concise and easy to read.

There are 530 topics arranged alphabetically, each of which is covered on a single page. The topic name is in bold-faced type at the top right or left corner of the page. Each page is divided into two columns. There are sections on basic information, treatment, and when to notify