

**Hypertension: A Clinician's Guide to Diagnosis and Treatment. Second edition.** By Barry J. Sobel and George L. Bakris. 149 pp. Philadelphia, Hanley & Belfus, 1999. \$22 (paper). ISBN 1-56053-3196-6.

These authors have assembled an extremely beneficial paperback manual dealing with a commonly encountered clinical condition - hypertension. Their design achieves the stated goal to be an up-to-the-minute, revised, quick reference for the active physician. One can efficiently locate general strategies for working up and treating primary and secondary disease, current treatment options, and medication dosing, side effects, and contraindications.

The first chapter signals the quick reference theme by providing an admirable review, in outline form, of the clinical physiology and pharmacology of blood pressure control. The mechanisms are represented in text, graphic, and tabular form, all of which permit the reader to become refamiliarized with this now elaborate area of basic science. Subsequent chapters deal with the criteria for diagnosing hypertension, relevant risk factors for the development of hypertension, and recommendations for the thorough evaluation of the patient with hypertension.

Each chapter is several pages long, remains highly focused, and concludes with a thorough list of current associated references. The general readership would appreciate most the commonly recommended evaluations and therapies for treatment of essential hypertension and malignant and accelerated hypertension. Treatment is organized by medication category (diuretics,  $\beta$ -blocking agents) and by special considerations (renal failure, chronic pulmonary disease). In additional chapters the authors examine hypertension in pregnancy, the evaluation of hyperaldosteronism, the approach to the patient with suspected pheochromocytoma, and the approach to renovascular hypertension. Tables of medication dosing, side effects, and interactions are plentiful, all of which have been updated and are helpful. The index is concise and quickly directs the clinician to the desired information.

The small size and streamlined organization of this softcover manual make it a useful tool in an important area of primary care. All audiences, students through experienced physicians, will find this selection an asset to their daily clinical practice.

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**Family Medicine: Pretest Self-Assessment and Review.** Edited by Alan J. Smith, Donald E. Nease, Jr, Michael L O'Dell, and Victor S. Sierpina. 153 pp. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1999. \$35 (paper). ISBN 0-07-052695-8.

Now here is an idea. Buy this book. Sit down. Take a test. That's what I did with *Family Medicine: Pretest Self-Assessment and Review*. The book is designed to simulate medical examinations. It is organized by chapters on adult medicine (52 questions), obstetrics and gynecology

(60 questions), surgery (51 questions), pediatrics (65 questions), geriatrics (34 questions), psychiatry and behavioral medicine (40 questions), and preventive and community health (91 questions). The questions are clearly written in a multiple-choice or true-or-false format. Answers are easily understood and specifically referenced by author, year, and page number. Sources referenced in the bibliography include 47 prominent texts and 57 popular journals. The questions are well thought out, and the answers are well researched. Some questions are long clinical scenarios and others are short inquiries.

Overall, the editors and contributors did an excellent job of preparing the questions and organizing the text. The book is well suited for physicians or resident physicians preparing for the certification examination. It might also be helpful in medical student training. I found the pretest to be too easy. As do all disgruntled students, I argued the questions I got wrong until I read the answers. Then I swallowed my pride. Most importantly, I practiced test taking and learned from the answers. This book offers a straightforward tool for test preparation. I recommend it to anyone preparing for family medicine examination.

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**Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Third edition.** Edited by King K. Holmes, P. Frederick Sparling, Per-Anders Mardh, Stanley M. Lemon, Walter E. Stamm, Peter Piot, and Judith N. Wasserheit. 1454 pp, illustrated. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1999. \$149. ISBN 0-07-029688-X.

This is the one essential text for the family practice group that takes care of a population afflicted by sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). A copy should also be available in medical center reference libraries for those who have a special interest in the subject, but I do not recommend it for the typical family physician's personal library. The product of an 8-year gestation, it weighs in at a robust 8 pounds 4.5 ounces (3755 g) and, as the bible of STDs, should be a useful reference well into the next decade. As a family physician in a public health setting, I was pleased to find the psychologic, social, global epidemiologic, political, legal, and ethical aspects of STD treatment addressed in addition to the expected information on microbiology, pathology, and treatment.

Because the text is written by 174 (my count) contributors from several disciplines and three continents, the readability varies among the 107 separate chapters. Four appendixes display the 1998 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines for treatment, guidelines for the use of antiretroviral agents in adults infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), drug interactions, and Internet resources for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and STDs. Most readers would find the 62-page index a practical starting point for clinical questions.

The two parts most useful for the clinician comprise 882 pages that detail descriptions of pathogens and STD care management. The other eight chapters include discussions of the socioeconomic impact of STDs and HIV