

will be an adjunctive text in a medical library, I am not convinced that the usefulness of this text outweighs its shortcomings.

Tillman Farley, MD
Fort Lupton, Colo

Fundamentals of Clinical Practice: A Textbook on the Patient, Doctor and Society. Edited by Mark B. Mengel and Warren L. Holleman. 515 pp. New York, Plenum Publishing, 1996. \$59.95. ISBN 0-306-45348-7.

This book would be an excellent addition to community and behavioral medicine curricula in both residency and medical school settings. Several of the authors are well-known teachers and researchers in family medicine. The textbook addresses the patient-physician relationship from a variety of angles. The first section addresses the patient, with chapters on human health and disease and individual and family development; the second section deals with becoming and being a physician in today's challenging health care environment; and the third section describes the numerous contexts of family, community, the workplace, environment, culture, and economics that have an impact on the physician-patient relationship. The remainder of the book is devoted to special issues of health policy and economics, medical ethics, and the current problems of tobacco, alcohol, and drug abuse; violence; mental illness; sexually transmitted diseases; vulnerable and indigent populations; and maternal and child health. Overall, I found the book to be fascinating and well researched.

This book successfully keeps the focus on the patient-physician relationship by inserting case presentations at regular intervals. The chapters are designed with cases and questions for small-group discussion at the end of each chapter.

When I used several of the chapters this past year during our community medicine rotation, the answers to some of the questions accompanying the case presentations did not appear to be straightforward. A facilitator's guide to accompany the cases and questions might be helpful. Additionally, the residents found that discussing cases which might not be applicable to their practice community to be less meaningful. Nevertheless, the cases raised lots of good issues for discussion.

This attempt at covering a broad range of topics is both successful and comprehensive. The book begins by focusing on the physician-patient relationship, adding layer upon layer until we can see in its entirety how complex and diverse practicing medicine can be, particularly in the context of worrisome public health issues. Medical schools and residency programs will find this textbook on the relationship of the patient, physician, and society a welcome resource as they strive to impart the community and public health implications of the physician's role.

Sara Cate, MD
Central Washington Family Medicine
Yakima

Manual of Skin Surgery—A Practical Guide to Dermatologic Procedures. By David J. Leffell and Marc D. Brown. 250 pp., illustrated. New York, Wiley-Liss, 1997. \$45. ISBN:0-471-13411-2.

This textbook of excisional cutaneous surgery is designed for medical students, residents, and practicing physicians. The text begins with a review of basic principles of anatomy and skin pathophysiology and then focuses on specific procedural skills training for office-based care and procedures. The book contains 13 chapters on diagnosis, practical anatomy, wound healing, skin biopsy, local anesthesia, surgical instruments, wound closure materials, patient preparation, basic excisional surgery, surgical complications, special topics in dermatologic surgery, and risk management. The chapter on special topics helps the practitioner modify general approaches for special circumstances. One appendix includes action guides for skin biopsy, pigmented lesions, basal cell cancer, squamous cell cancer, and complications. These action guides are suggested algorithms in the work-up and treatment strategies. Another appendix includes vendors for dermatologic surgery products.

The book can be understood by learners at any level. The index is detailed and easy to follow. The text uses drawings and color pictures to focus the reader. The drawings are extremely helpful, particularly in the challenging area of the face, where special anatomic consideration is given to recommended planes for elliptical excision. The strategy of the authors, beginning with basic principles of defining the lesion, reviewing the anatomy, and describing normal wound healing, followed by procedural considerations of anesthesia and biopsy, is very effective. Although there is no formal bibliography, there are suggestions for further reading with descriptions of seven other texts. It is important to understand that this text does not relate to skin disease but rather surgical approaches to lesions.

I believe that this reference is useful for the family practice clinic, is an excellent learning guide for family medicine residents, and provides a strong foundation for medical students. Best of all, its relatively low cost should allow even those on a limited budget to include it in a personal library.

Scott A. Fields, MD
Oregon Health Sciences University
Portland

A Measure of My Days: The Journal of a Country Doctor. By David Loxterkamp. 321 pp. Hanover, NH, University Press of New England, 1997. \$24.95 (paper). ISBN 0-87451-799-0.

This is an engaging and important book that should take its place next to the classic photo-essay by Berger and Mohr, *A Fortunate Man*, which describes the life of the English country doctor John Sassall (Berger J, Mohr J. A fortunate man. New York: Pantheon Books, 1967). Each provides an intimate look inside the prac-