

## Book Reviews

**Appleton & Lange Specialty Board Review: Family Practice. Sixth edition.** By Ernest Yub-Ting Yen. 277 pp. Stamford, Conn, Appleton & Lange, 1999. \$45. ISBN 0-8385-8739-9.

In preparation for board certification or recertification examinations, many family physicians help to define their knowledge strengths or deficits by answering a series of practice questions. This sixth edition of the *Appleton & Lange Specialty Board Review: Family Practice* was designed, as are so many similar workbooks on the market, to provide samples of questions comparable in content and style to the actual board examination. The author notes that residents in training are his intended primary reading audience, although recertifying practitioners would also benefit.

The workbook begins with a brief discussion of test-taking tips and review of the various types of formatted questions. The following eight chapters include multiple questions (approximately 1500) in the topic areas of psychiatry, surgery, gynecology, obstetrics, community medicine and geriatrics, internal medicine, pediatrics, and several medicine specialties. Answers to questions are of varying length and cite 1 of 85 reference texts, generally published from 1992 to 1996. No works published after 1996 are referenced despite the declaration in the Preface that this volume has been reviewed and updated by academic faculty.

Most of the questions in the text are fairly typical of board examination questions in general content and type of question, including true-false and best-response multiple choice. There are no K-format questions. One drawback is the lack of questions based on photographs (such as those of dermatologic problems), electrocardiograms, radiographs, and graphic information. These formats typically are part of board examinations, and their omission represents a potential handicap for the board candidate. Another problem, although of a lesser degree, is that discussions of answers refer to a single entire text. This characteristic is in contradistinction to other board-sponsored preparation publications, such as *The Core Content Review of Family Medicine*, which include specific page references to several texts.

Overall, this workbook will suffice as a good source of typical questions for board examination preparation. Readers will need to supplement this text with additional workbooks that have pictorial-based questions and answers, and they might be somewhat limited by the time necessary to locate topic-specific references. Cost could play a factor in choosing this work rather than another.

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**Headache. Volume 1.** By Egiluis L. Spierings. 236 pp. Woburn, Mass, Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998. \$25 (paper). ISBN 0-7506-7128-9.

This book is a concise overview of a common and often challenging problem encountered in family practice. The book is divided into three sections covering acute, subacute, and chronic headaches. Each section begins with a general discussion of the clinical approach, examination, and diagnostic considerations of these three types of headaches. Subsequent chapters briefly review the incidence, cause, clinical symptoms, and diagnosis of specific headache conditions.

The author provides excellent case studies to help differentiate the different types of headaches. In the chapters on abortive and preventive treatment of migraines, convenient tables list medications, dosage, route of administration, side effects, and contraindications. It is a small book that is well organized and a quick read.

That *Headache* is not an evidence-based review of current knowledge about headache management is a major weakness. Although the author at times uses original research to support his conclusions, he admits in his introduction that the approach to management draws heavily from his own experience in diagnosing and treating headaches. He justifies this approach by saying that he trained with Dr. John Graham, who he states has been referred to as the "father of headache management." Nevertheless, it is difficult to assess the validity of this expert's opinion.

Another weakness of this book is that the discussion of the management of headaches is inconsistent. For example, an entire chapter is dedicated to the treatment of cluster headaches and one line to the treatment of headache with meningitis, and in the chapter on chronic daily headaches, no reference to treatment is made.

This book is easy to read and provides excellent case studies to illustrate the many different headache conditions, but it would have been strengthened by a more systematic review of the medical literature on headache management.

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**Managing Mental Health Problems: A Practical Guide for Primary Care.** By Nick Kates and Marilyn Craven. 374 pp. Kirkland, Wash, Hogrefe & Huber, 1998. \$39. ISBN 0-88937-124-5.

In writing this text, the authors' goals were "to acknowledge the major role played by the primary care providers in the delivery of mental health care, and to provide a practical, problem-based approach to the detection and treatment of the problems they encounter most frequently." They recognized the challenge the nonpsychiatrist

faces when dealing with patients who have physical complaints with components that relate to stress, relationship problems, bereavement, or the emotional sequelae of chronic physical illness.

Many times these patients must be evaluated in a 10- to 15-minute visit, when it is incumbent on the physician to make the diagnosis, assess the potential for change, and use his or her skills to bring about that change or to refer to another provider, if appropriate.

This book is an excellent source of information for the primary care provider. It is organized the way an encounter would flow—interviewing, assessing the problem, and then developing a management plan. Chapters that follow take up such specific topics as family problems, using community resources, and mental health services. The mental health problems are then addressed—depression, anxiety, grief psychosis, schizophrenia, and bipolar affective disorder. The authors offer suggestions regarding emotional components of medical conditions and problems involving sleep, alcohol, the older patient, abuse, and sexuality.

There are many educational aids throughout the book, and several mnemonics are included for various conditions. The authors also include several tables of medications, equivalent doses, and common adverse effects for drugs prescribed for patients with mental health problems. At the end of each chapter, criteria are recommended for referral to a consultant and a list of reasonable expectations of the primary care provider.

As many of us realize as we practice, the more skilled we become with mental health problems, the better our care of the patient. Because we provide continuity of care for our patients and their families, we are in an ideal position to help in all aspects of their health care. Their mental health should be a major aspect of that care. Primary care providers would do well by reading this book and following the suggestions that are made.

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**Neurology in Primary Care.** By Joseph Friedman. 219 pp. Woburn, Mass, Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999. \$25 (paper). ISBN 0-7506-7036-3.

The goal of this pocket-sized reference book is to provide a framework for approaching common neurologic conditions in primary care settings. The author also hopes that those using this text will reduce inappropriate referrals to neurologists. These goals are extremely relevant to family physicians. This monograph, however, is weighted too heavily on the author's personal practice experience. References in the book are scant, making it appear to be based on expert opinion. The book is presented in a conversational style that is not succinct. In fact, the author states that he used a lecture to medical students as a basis for this book.

There are 12 chapters on common neurologic diagnoses in primary care, including headache, dizziness, gait disorders, transient ischemic attacks, and epilepsy. At the end of each chapter, a half-page of clinical pearls sum-

marize the most salient points of the chapter. Tables are simple and easy to read.

My recommendation would be to start by reading the clinical pearls and then refer to the text if the reader wants more information. Residents and medical students might find this text interesting, but my bias is that an overabundance of texts like this already exists; we do not need another. Although the information seems relevant to what family physicians see in their offices, it is impossible to assess its validity.

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**Clinical Management of the Child and Teenager with Diabetes.** Edited by Leslie Plotnick and Randi Henderson. 268 pp. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998. \$24.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8018-5909-3.

The authors intend this text to be a practical, how-to book with a goal of providing the information that primary care clinicians need to treat children and adolescents with type 1 diabetes. The book is well written and well organized. It would be of interest to primary care physicians as well as other providers who care for patients with type 1 diabetes, including dietitians, mental health counselors, parents, and even older children with diabetes. Thirteen brief chapters provide the important aspects of well-child care, patient education, insulin and dietary management, complications, and psychological issues. Case studies are included throughout, and the appendix includes valuable assessment and medical record tools.

This volume would be worthwhile reading for any trainee or provider who cares for patients with type 1 diabetes. The appendices and guidelines would also be useful for any practitioner who would like to improve practice efficiency and quality-of-care provided to these patients.

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**Gellis & Kagan's Current Pediatric Therapy. Volume 16.** Edited by Frederick D. Burg, Julie R. Ingelfinger, Ellen R. Wald, and Richard A. Polin. 1298 pp. Philadelphia, WB Saunders, 1999. \$98. ISBN 0-7216-6998-0.

This book, which is in its 16th edition, has been a pediatric standard for more than 30 years. The title still carries the names of the original editors, but the reins have been passed to new editors. In the current edition of this multiauthored text, the number of contributors has increased from 445 to 521, and an impressive lineup of recognized authorities represent many areas of pediatric medicine. In addition, the size of the book has increased by more than 25%; the content has been rearranged to include additional sections on immunology, cancer, and dentistry; and diabetes and metabolism are separated from the endocrine section. Contributions from pediatric