

recommend it. The photographs are numerous and of high quality. The text is clearly organized into chapters arranged alphabetically by disease name. Each chapter in turn has a uniform organization: a terse definition followed by a photograph showing the typical clinical features, photomicrographs at low and high magnification, more photographs showing different attributes of the lesions, a statement about the course of the disease, a section titled "Integration: Unifying Concept," and last, therapy. The authors made a point of including photographs of patients of a variety of races. I enjoyed the photograph of two of the authors showing common baldness.

The photographs are the only part of the book that family physicians will potentially find useful; however, many of the photographs seem redundant, and the photomicrographs were of no value to me. The Course of the Disease and Integration: Unifying Concept sections are described on a molecular level using many unfamiliar terms. The therapy sections typically contain just a few general recommendations. For example, the chapter on acne vulgaris contains 63 photographs but only three sentences about therapy. Some terms unfamiliar to me in this chapter were *conglobate* and *anetoderma*.

The authors describe this atlas as light in weight (but weighty in substance) and easy to fit into a wide pocket. But at 2.5 pounds and 5.5 inches wide, this book would tear off any pocket it could fit into.

Most family physicians are likely to prefer a dermatology text that includes much more information about treatment, though fewer photographs. This atlas will appeal primarily to physicians who specifically want more photographs of skin diseases and who are willing to pay the inevitable high price of such a book.

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**20 Common Problems in Preventive Health Care.** Edited by Douglas Campos-Outcalt; Barry Weiss, series editor. 510 pp, illustrated. New York, McGraw-Hill, 2000. \$39.95 (paper). ISBN 0-07-012044-7.

This text provides a thorough discussion of common preventable problems encountered in the primary care setting. Seven chapters relate to the care of infants and children (immunizations, vision problems, hearing problems, dental decay, iron-deficiency anemia, lead poisoning, newborn metabolic screening), two chapters to the care of adolescents and young adults (sexually transmitted diseases, prenatal care), and the remaining 11 chapters to the care of adults (smoking prevention and cessation; alcohol and drug abuse; cancer of the cervix, breast, prostate, colon; cardiovascular disease; diabetes; osteoporosis; adult vaccinations; and the traveler). There is good uniformity in the organization of each chapter. The writing is clear and concise and the tables are relevant and well prepared.

The authors have relied heavily on recommendations from the US Preventive Services Task Force, the Canadian Task Force on the Periodic Health Examination,

and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. All three are reputable sources for preventive health guidelines.

Each chapter provides a relevant, thorough discussion of the topic being addressed. The authors use a uniform approach when examining each of the clinical issues presented in the text. Most chapters contain an introduction; a discussion about the natural history and epidemiology of the problem; primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention approaches; recommendations to clinicians, errors to avoid; and emerging trends.

The 1998 book entitled *Clinician's Handbook of Preventive Services, 2nd Edition*, prepared by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion of the US Department of Health and Human Services (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1998), has information on about 15 of the 20 topics covered in *20 Common Problems*. The primary difference between these two texts is that the 62 chapters in the *Clinician's Handbook* are briefer and provide an overview rather than an in-depth examination of each subject area.

I have two concerns that detracted somewhat from *20 Common Problems*. Each chapter refers to studies that support the recommendations made by the authors. Unfortunately, not all studies are cited in the list of references at the end of each chapter, and the references that are included are not consistently linked to the text. In addition, each chapter begins with a table of contents for the subsections within the chapter. The subsections, however, are not accompanied by page numbers, so the reader has to leaf through each chapter when seeking specific information about the topics addressed in the chapter.

These concerns aside, this text is useful. It will serve as a valuable source of prevention information for medical students, residents, and clinicians who seek to acquire an in-depth understanding of 20 highly relevant topics.

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**Conn's Current Therapy 2000.** Edited by Robert E. Rakel. 1284 pp, illustrated. Philadelphia, W B Saunders, 2000. \$59. ISBN 0-7216-7225-6.

As an off-the-shelf quick reference, *Conn's Current Therapy* has for years been a dependable and predictable resource. Dr. Rakel does a nice job, as usual, of assembling a mostly new group of authors each year to write the disease-focused chapters. The book is sort of like a McDonald's restaurant—you know what the product's quality will be like and without any unpleasant surprises. In a practice setting, when you need a quick education on a particular subject with a little more in-depth information for patient management, the authors pull together the information in a fashion that can be comprehended in a 5- to 10-minute reading. The reference is also appropriate for medical student and resident education. Each article ranges from two to six pages and includes an abbreviated diagnostic review followed by more-compre-

hensive coverage of therapy. There are 70 table illustrations in this edition, an alphabetic list of common ICD-9-CM codes inside the front cover, and a final chapter on reference intervals for the interpretation of laboratory tests.

This book is authority based rather than evidence based, and references are not included. This lack of references might soon be a shortcoming, as primary care physicians are demanding more often evidence-based practice recommendations. This book offers the type of information you might expect to receive during a telephone consultation with a subspecialist, and mostly you accept it as correct and current practice. Although most of the chapters are newly authored, a few are by the same author, and the material is unchanged from last year's edition. An example is the chapter on non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. In a changing field such as cancer therapy, this causes me to question the currency of the drug regimens described.

In summary, on an every 2- to 3-year basis, *Conn's Current Therapy* remains a good buy for the practicing physician. I use Post-it flags to mark pages with especially useful tables. Billed by the editor as the "latest approved methods of treatment for the practicing physician," this book comes as close as any to filling that claim.

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**Primary Care Radiology.** By Fred A. Mettler, Jr, Milton J. Guiberteau, Carolyn M. Voss, and Christopher E. Urbina. 269 pp, illustrated. Philadelphia, WB Saunders, 2000. \$45 (paper). ISBN 0-7216-8333-9.

*Primary Care Radiology* is a soft-cover, inexpensively priced text that aims to serve as a reference for primary care providers to help guide them in ordering imaging studies. The book contains an introduction followed by eight chapters that break down the subject into organ systems and body regions. The introduction contains references to some excellent Internet Web sites. In each of the following chapters, subheadings include presenting symptoms such as acute abdominal pain, specific radiologic findings such as the solitary pulmonary nodule, and diagnoses such as tuberculosis. Each chapter concludes with a list of suggested readings.

High-quality images are liberally spread throughout the book. The images are clear and have easy-to-read labels and legends. The tables are helpful and logical. I especially appreciated the tables included in the appendix, which addresses the cost of various radiologic examinations and the levels of radiation exposure from several different procedures.

I found the text to be primarily oriented toward radiologists rather than primary care providers. Although the premise of the text is excellent, a greater emphasis on the perspective of the primary care provider would be helpful. For example, the book is structured around anatomy, not presenting symptoms or clinical problems. This approach of moving from an imaging procedure to diagnosis is that of the radiologist. In contrast, the primary

care physicians proceeds from the presenting clinical problem to diagnosis. Also, the suggested readings were exclusively radiology texts. Lacking were references to basic, essential texts for primary care providers, such as Goodman and Felson's *Felson's Principles of Chest Roentgenology: A Programmed Text* (Philadelphia, W B Saunders, 1999).

Overall, in spite of its shortcomings, *Primary Care Radiology* is probably one of the best radiology textbooks to date for primary care providers. The writing is clear, the images are excellent, and the price is right. In the future, a greater emphasis should be placed upon the day-to-day diagnostic challenges encountered by primary care providers. The current text is best suited for those interested in an in-depth study of imaging; it is not useful as a reference book.

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**"Ferri's Clinical Advisor 2000: Instant Diagnosis and Treatment.** By Fred F. Ferri. 1312 pp, illustrated. St. Louis, CV Mosby, 2000. \$54.95. ISBN 0-323-00971-9.

Given the scope of family medicine, general reference texts are a most valuable commodity. In addition, it would be beneficial to have general up-to-date information available in a format that provides the user with easy-to-read, concise, and quickly attained information. "Ferri's Clinical Advisor 2000" is such a text.

This hardcover text, 1,312 pages long, is divided into seven separate sections. The first, on diseases and disorders, addresses more than 500 clinical topics generally in one to two pages each, with three columns of concise prose covering basic information, diagnosis, and treatment. Areas discussed include epidemiology, physical findings, etiology, differential diagnosis, workups, and treatments. Some topics include pearls. Occasional black and white pictures, x-rays, and figures highlight the subject matter.

The second section contains almost 300 headings of differential diagnoses based on signs or symptoms a patient might have. The information is provided in table or boxed format. The third section contains more than 130 clinical algorithmic tables for various symptoms or diagnoses. The fourth section covers common laboratory tests ordered in daily practice. Information provided includes normal values, the common abnormal findings of the test, and possible causes. Tables and boxes are used to highlight the prose. These pages are divided into two columns.

The fifth section, on clinical preventive services, provides information on various health-screening assessments and periodic examinations. Recommendations are based upon US Preventive Services Task Force data. Part A reviews periodic health examinations. Part B reviews screening tests regarding individual disease states and disorders. Part C discusses counseling issues for various problems, and Part D, immunizations and chemoprophylaxis.