

sonable job of achieving their goals. The authors are knowledgeable and well prepared to write about their respective subjects, though authors with a wider geographic distribution (all were from the northeastern United States) might have provided a broader view of the topics. The chapter titled "The Provider's Perspective," for example, was written by an internist from an academic medical center.

The first half of the book reviews the fundamental elements of managed care for the practicing physician: definitions, reimbursement arrangements, and financial and clinical assessments of practice. Though accurate in content, the chapters, written at a very basic level, were long and often boring. The chapter on financial assessment (Chapter 6), however, did contain an excellent review of activity-based costing methods of cost accounting.

"Clinical Outcomes" (Chapter 9) was a well-written overview of this important topic. The following chapter on quality improvement proved to be disappointing—comprehensive yet rambling. The strongest chapters in the book were Chapters 11 and 12 on the legal implications of managed care. The authors here provide a thorough and understandable presentation of the legal minefields facing physicians in managed care and integrated physician organizations.

Positioning Your Practice for the Managed Care Market provides a solid overview on a complex subject. The book will provide a nice reference to the practicing physician who has little background in managed care and should serve as a learning tool for medical students and residents as well.

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Differential Diagnosis of Common Complaints. Third Edition. By Robert H. Sellar. 407 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders, 1996. \$29.95 (paper). ISBN 0-72165808-3.

As stated in the book's Preface, patients generally come to their physician's office with varying complaints or symptoms rather than with specific diagnoses. This new edition paperback provides a framework for trying to sort out the myriad of diagnostic possibilities that arise from a certain specific symptom. Its usefulness to primary care physicians should be obvious, especially in today's medical climate, where they act as gatekeeper and see the patients on the front line, compared with years ago when patients might have sought out a specialist they thought would handle their complaint.

The author addresses 36 of the most common complaints patients have when seeing their physician. Topics include abdominal pain, cough, forgetfulness, dizziness, fatigue, chest pain, gynecologic problems, extremity pain, and weight issues, with a separate chapter dedicated to each complaint. The chapters are subdivided into sections to provide a diagnostic decision-making framework for the specific complaint. The

sections include a general description of the problem, the nature of the patient and the symptoms, associated symptoms, precipitating, aggravating, and ameliorating factors, physical findings and diagnostic tests, and less common diagnostic considerations. The chapters are well laid out and have easy-to-read tables that take the reader through a concise differential diagnosis of the more common causes of the specific symptom. References are provided at the end of each chapter, and a thorough index is included. Other helpful tables and illustrations are found throughout the chapters.

A major drawback of this text is that, in general, treatments and therapeutics are not discussed, but this information can easily be found in other texts that most practicing physicians would have on hand.

This book can be used by physicians, residents, medical students, and other medical personnel. I would highly recommend its use by medical students during their initial clinical rotations. Despite possibly sounding like it would have limited usefulness to a seasoned practicing physician, this text does live up to its title and can be a useful resource when in doubt about a particular patient. The text can reassure or suggest more directions to pursue.

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Consultations in Gastroenterology. Edited by William J. Snape, Jr. 968 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders, 1996. \$125. ISBN-7216-4670-0.

In this first edition, Dr. Snape attempts to create a text that will meet most needs of the primary care physician. He has designed this book "...to sit by the generalist's hand and provide guidance for the care of their patient" regarding gastrointestinal disease. This statement alone will catch the eye of primary care physicians who are interested in having the right gastroenterology text at their fingertips. The author hopes that this book will "fill the niche" as a useful resource and "how-to manual for treatment."

The book is divided into 7 separate sections. The sections are organized into chapters written by one of the 208 authors, each of whom has recognized expertise in the condition or disease. The first section, entitled "General" contains 23 chapters addressing the most common gastrointestinal complaints and symptom complexes encountered by primary care physicians (eg, nausea and vomiting, dyspepsia, chronic constipation, fecal incontinence, diarrhea). There is even discussion of some common pediatric topics (eg, "Foreign Bodies in Children," "Gastrointestinal Tract Hemorrhage in Children"). The chapters give full coverage of each topic, ranging from pathophysiology, diagnostic strategies, and differential diagnoses to appropriate treatment strategies.

The remaining sections are organized by specific organ systems: esophagus, stomach, intestinal tract, pancreas, and hepatobiliary tract, with each section con-

taining chapters on organ-specific disorders. Most chapters are arranged in an easy-to-read format and include excellent tables that are practical and easy to reference. This feature is especially helpful when you need only a quick reminder. Some (but not all) chapters include useful algorithms that are equally helpful for quick referencing. Each chapter concludes with updated references for more in-depth reading. The illustrations are rendered in impressive detail and even include some excellent surgical illustrations. The index is reliable and easy to use, and the layout makes a quick search possible.

The substantial amount of information on every possible gastroenterology topic you can imagine in itself is a shortcoming. There is simply too much information for any busy primary care physician to use routinely in practice. Furthermore, all the authors did not use the same format or present their information in an accessible and user-friendly manner (eg, easy-to-reference tables, algorithms, illustrations, etc). My only surprise was not finding a chapter devoted entirely to colon carcinoma, although there appears to be good information on other benign tumors and cancer in all of the other sections.

The editor indicates that this book provides "...treatment protocols used by the experts...[that] will direct the physician to the most efficient therapy...and in the era of cost containment...also the least expensive." Certainly, for managed care such a resource would be invaluable. Philosophically, the editor has the right idea; unfortunately, the book falls short. One only has to look at some of the diagnostic strategies recommended for several disorders (eg, workup for malabsorption, chronic diarrhea, or fecal incontinence) to realize why.

Overall, this text is an excellent reference for any primary care physician or gastroenterologist who is looking for an in-depth review of gastroenterology topics, and would lend itself well to medical libraries located in residency programs, community hospitals, and large group practices. It offers too much informa-

tion for any single provider unless he or she has a special interest in gastroenterology. Dr. Snape does accomplish his goal of developing an excellent text review that can fill the niche between "...multivolume encyclopedic reviews..." and the "how-to" manuals of treatment.

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Practical Orthopedics. Fourth Edition. By Lonnie R. Mercier, Fred J. Pettit, Dean F. Tamsiea, and John T. Heieck. 512 pp., illustrated. St. Louis. Mosby-Year Book, 1966. \$69.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8151-5903-X.

This edition of *Practical Orthopedics* follows three successful previous publications. Aimed at students, residents, and physicians whose fields are outside orthopedics, it addresses problems that are commonly encountered in primary care. There are two general sections, the first dealing with musculoskeletal disorders by anatomic region, and the second dealing with arthritides, infections, and injuries. Radiological imaging is nicely covered, as is sports medicine. This book certainly meets its stated objectives.

The material covered is certainly relevant in family practice. The most common, as well as the unusual, conditions are discussed. The writing is clear and concise, and is sufficiently detailed to address differential diagnosis and treatment. The material is nicely organized and falls into the pattern of problem solving that most of us have found effective. The illustrations are particularly well done and helpful, as are the photographs and reproductions of radiographs.

The audiences best served by this book are family physicians and other primary care physicians as well as residents and interns. I am enthusiastic about this book.

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