

Book Reviews

Handbook of Pediatric Orthopedics. By Paul D. Sponseller and Heidi M. Stephens. 201 pp., illustrated. Boston, Little, Brown, 1996. \$34.95 (paper). ISBN 0-316-80872-5.

Handbook of Pediatric Orthopedics is a pocket-sized manual designed to give the reader specific and practical information to assist with diagnosis, test interpretation, and treatment planning. The book has six chapters that cover normal and abnormal growth and development, skeletal syndromes and systemic disorders, neuromuscular diseases, trauma, and special procedures. The appendix contains some normal laboratory values and information on dosage and administration of medications commonly used in pediatric orthopedics.

The 47 pages covering normal growth and development are packed with charts, graphs, and nomograms. I now know that the normal cadence for a 4 year old is 160 steps per minute compared with an adult, who takes 116 steps per minute. The problem with all these charts and numbers is that they are not presented in a useful primary care context. Although the authors should be commended for accumulating all the tables and figures in one small book, after reading it, I do not know when or how to use this information effectively. The information I wish I had, such as how to safely and effectively use conscious sedation in children when performing orthopedic procedures, is unfortunately not included.

The authors state that they are not trying to provide treatment details that are more extensively covered in standard texts. Nevertheless, common conditions, such as scoliosis, nursemaid's elbow, or pediatric fractures, are not discussed in sufficient detail to help family physicians diagnose and manage these conditions.

It appears that this handbook would be most useful to an orthopedic resident during a pediatric orthopedic rotation. Family physicians will find better uses for their valuable pocket space.

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Interpretation of Diagnostic Tests. Sixth edition. By Jacques Wallach. 1093 pp., illustrated. Boston, Little, Brown, 1996. Price \$39.95 (paper). ISBN 0-316-92048-7.

Dr. Wallach has done it once again. Make no question about it, this is the one book that you would take with you if you were sent to a remote island to practice medicine and needed one reference book. Since the publication of his fifth edition in 1992, there have been many more changes (a feat that I thought was close to impossible!). Yet he has maintained the readability and utility of this wonderful resource. In the book's usual fashion, its 1093 pages are jam-packed with so much information that you can honestly say good-bye to your *Harrisons'* or *Cecil's'*

The book not only has grown from 933 pages, but its size has also been enlarged to $9\frac{1}{4} \times 6 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$ inches of the last edition. This size increase could be a drawback for some in that it is no longer feasible to carry it with you in your laboratory coat. Nevertheless, we are told in the preface that a condensed, pocket-sized companion is on the way.

The text has maintained its organization with the division into the same four sections found in the last editions: I. Normal Values; II. Specific Laboratory Examinations; III. Diseases of Organ Systems; and IV. Drugs and Laboratory Test Values. The information is easily accessible by using the well-planned index (132 pages) or the table of contents, or simply by flipping through the pages to find the specific test, laboratory result, or specific condition you are looking for. There are some new headings in Section II (Use in, Interference, and Interpretation) that join the old favorites (Increased in and Decreased in), which help expedite a search for the specific laboratory test to order. Other new designs include highlighting important facts and cross-referencing, which eliminates redundancy.

Not only are the same helpful algorithms from the last edition here to aid you in diagnostic workups, but Wallach has added many new algorithms and tables. The tables of normal laboratory values are extensive, comprehensive, and clearly organized to permit quick referencing in one easy step. Especially useful are the age-assigned normal values for almost all of the reference values. The tables comparing specific test results for a variety of diseases are still there and are just as resourceful. The sequence of test findings in Section III continues to be arranged with the more useful or pathognomic findings listed first and the incidental or less useful findings appearing later. Established diagnostic criteria for many diseases have been included (eg, systemic lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis).

The list of medical disorders is extensive and thoroughly covered. The chapters that were added in the last edition covering disorders due to physical and chemical agents, effects of drugs on test values, and therapeutic monitoring of drugs and toxicology are maintained and continue to be excellent resources not commonly covered in other texts.

Wallach continues to use conventional unit values in the text rather than SI units, but he devotes a good portion of the appendix to conversion tables. If there is but one criticism of this text, it is that the figures and tables for chapters 7, 8, 11, and 13 are located in the appendix, not in their respective chapters. It is not clear to the reader why this was done, nor is it clearly stated in these chapters where these figures and tables are located. It will take the reader some time to figure this one out on his or her own.

Wallach states that his goal is "making medical information available in its most useful form to students and