

## Book Reviews

**Saunders Manual of Medical Practice.** Edited by Robert Rakel and illustrated by Jan Redden. 1247 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, WB Saunders Company, 1996. \$95. ISBN 0-7216-5192-5.

In the fast pace of today's health care, it seems that each family physician needs a vast database reduced to easily accessible outlines for quick review. Fortunately, Robert Rakel has recognized this need and developed a resource manual that provides a convenient mechanism to accomplish this task. Unfortunately, this volume by virtue of its comprehensiveness will need to reside on the bookshelf rather than function as a handy pocket resource for house staff.

Addressing clinical conditions from asthma to zoster, the text takes us through each of the body systems, including sections on symptoms and commonly performed procedures, and finishes with appropriate disease states. To make this volume even more useful, the inside front and back covers contain an alphabetic list of diseases, ICD-9-CM codes and procedures, and CPT-4 codes for billing purposes. That most of the 414 authors are either family physicians or general internists ensures the information provided is both relevant and practical. Important areas, such as key symptoms, signs, tests, and treatment, are highlighted, and the chapters are rounded out with a bibliography containing recent and classic references to allow for further in-depth study.

Perhaps it could be said that, if stranded on a desert island, 9 out of 10 family physicians would prefer to have this book.

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**Sports Medicine: The School-Age Athlete.** Second Edition. Edited by Bruce Reider. 774 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, WB Saunders, 1996. \$135. ISBN 0-7216-5673-0.

All family physicians can keep track of the seasons by our patient schedule. Summer is ending and school is starting when the sports physical examinations dominate our day. Unless one does not see children, it would be difficult to practice family medicine and not do sports physical examinations. Yet I am uncertain whether most family physicians would want to spend \$135 to have this book in their library.

The editor clearly states the book is written for clinicians who care for "the competitive young athlete." Although family physicians are included in the targeted audience for the book, the preface also notes the authors are mostly orthopedic surgeons. This bias is reflected in several areas in the book.

Lateral epicondylitis is a common problem that I see in the office almost weekly. The treatment discussion in the text rightly promotes such conservative mea-

asures as rest, ice, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication. The next section, however, discusses surgery as an indicated solution. The tables in this section list the use of injectable steroids to treat lateral epicondylitis. Given that the chapter author notes adults aged 20 to 30 years often require surgery, I think a discussion of steroid injection as a final treatment approach before surgery is indicated.

For many school-age athletes the most important discussions often do not involve the sport. The sports physical examination visit offers one of the few opportunities to discuss such issues as drug use and sexual activity and to review proper use of seat belts and helmets. The chapter on the preparticipation examination is system based and quite thorough, and it includes brief discussions of the lack of evidence-based recommendations for frequency of visits and the lack of any data to support routine laboratory screening, but no mention is made of exploring any preventive issues at this visit.

The organ system approach is further reflected in the discussion of systemic steroids. Four and one half pages are allotted to the basic pharmacology, side-effects, and use of steroids among teenage athletes. Yet only three paragraphs mention the ethics and counseling of steroid use. In dealing with the teenagers, these topics are more important than is the pharmacology of steroid use, which can be found in any drug reference.

Overall, if a family physician is a team physician or has a special emphasis on sports medicine, this text is worth its price. For the average family physician, however, the sections addressing sports participation physical examinations in a family medicine or pediatric text will suffice.

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**Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult—1996.** Edited by Mark R. Dambro and Jo Griffith. 1260 pp. Baltimore, Williams & Wilkins, 1997. \$54.95. ISBN 0-683-20320-9.

Reference texts are available on any subject in medicine, but for primary care physicians, a reference dealing with the basics of a great many medical conditions and disease states is invaluable. Other helpful characteristics of a text that would serve busy family physicians well in their daily medical practice would be to have the information quickly accessible and easy to read. *Griffith's* is just such a reference.

This hardcover book contains approximately 584 expanded topics and 412 short topics, contributed by numerous authors, addressing the vast majority of medical problems the primary care physician will encounter. The topics are generally about specific medical conditions, not about a differential diagnosis of