

## 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, sub-acute, 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