

Gastroenterology and Hepatology: Clinical Medicine Series. Edited by Gabriele Bianchi Porro, Michel Cremer, Guenter Krejs, Giuliano Ramadori, and Jorgen Rask-Maden. 738 pp. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1999. \$75 (paper). ISBN 0-07-709519-7.

This book provides a comprehensive examination of a broad range of clinical issues pertaining to the fields of gastroenterology and hepatology. The book has 67 chapters divided into 11 different sections. In addition to the editor-in-chief, there are 4 editors, 1 consulting editor, and 97 contributing authors from 16 different countries. Despite this number of authors, to the credit of the editors, the writing is quite even, and the information is current and relevant to the needs of primary care clinicians.

The book begins with the section entitled "Practical Approaches to Symptoms and Signs," in which the authors address the most common gastrointestinal and hepatic problems encountered by patients. The remaining sections—"Esophagus," "Stomach and Duodenum," "Pancreas," "Small and Large Intestine," "Inflammatory Bowel Disease," "Biliary Tract," "Liver," "Systemic Infections," and "Principles of Drug Therapy"—use a systems-based approach.

For the most part, the text is thorough in its presentation of information, with extensive consideration of pathophysiology and morphology, as well as methods for diagnosis and treatment. Some readers might find the text provides more information than they want, especially if they are seeking a quick reference to aid with real-time patient care.

I was surprised the authors did not provide a more thorough consideration of nutrition and anthropometric measurements. Both topics are mentioned briefly in the "Weight Loss" chapter, but there is no chart for the rapid determination of body mass index, and suboptimal consideration is given to normal nutritional requirements. In addition, this chapter on weight loss does not address the evaluation of the patient with unintentional weight loss, a topic that would seem appropriate for such a book.

Overall, I believe clinicians who want access to a text that addresses pathophysiologic and patient management issues within the fields of gastroenterology and hepatology will find this book to be a worthwhile addition to their reference libraries.

David R. Garr, MD
Medical University of South Carolina
Charleston

Medical Complications During Pregnancy. Fifth edition. Edited by Gerald N. Burrow and Thomas P. Duffy. 532 pp, illustrated. Philadelphia, WB Saunders, 1999. \$79. ISBN 0-7216-7508-5.

This medical book, in its fifth edition, provides a comprehensive review of the important medical conditions complicating pregnancies today.

The first chapter begins with a discussion of the concepts underlying the early recognition of and counseling the high-risk patient, improved understanding of maternal and fetal pathophysiology, the natural history of fetal disorders, and the approved application of the latest technical advances in the diagnosis and management of high-risk pregnancies.

The newly authored chapters on diabetes, hypertensive disorders, cardiovascular disease, calcium metabolism and parathyroid glands, gastrointestinal complications, viral infections, and neoplastic disease are well written and, along with the other updated and rewritten chapters, are comprehensive in their provision of updated pathophysiologic concepts that guide the diagnostic and therapeutic rationale.

This book is an invaluable resource of clinical information for the primary care physician and the specialist caring for the pregnant patient and the neonate. The clinician and the clinical teacher will appreciate the tables and figures that highlight and summarize key information with visual clarity. They will also appreciate the thorough and careful review of the literature with its attention to the best evidence supporting diagnosis and management. Each chapter has an extensive bibliography that includes valuable review articles and other pertinent references for the reader who wants to pursue any given topic further.

Ramoncita R. Maestas, MD
Providence Family Medicine Residency Program
Seattle

Instructions for Geriatric Patients. Second edition. By William A. Soderman, Jr. 445 pages, illustrated. Philadelphia, WB Saunders, 1999.

According to the Preface, the goal of this book is "to provide simple, direct aids to patient communication." The patient instruction sheets are intended to augment verbal with written information the patient education given to seniors or their families. The appropriate target audience for this book is anyone providing comprehensive care for elderly patients. For the most part, the author's intended goal is accomplished; however, there are areas where helpful improvements could be made.

The book consists of 427 instruction sheets or anatomical diagrams that are three-hole punched and perforated so they can be removed and inserted into a 3-ring binder for easier photocopying. Too many of the pieces are 1 or 2 full pages plus an additional 4 or 5 lines on another page; better editing of the pieces would condense them and eliminate this waste. The instruction

sheets are prepared using a large-type face that is easier for senior patients to read. Inside the back cover is a CD-ROM that contains a duplication of all the sheets plus a special instructions sheet that can be customized with personal instructions for any topic not already included in the book. The CD-ROM uses the Adobe Acrobat Reader 3 program for its displays and printouts; it will install the program if it does not already reside on the user's computer. This service is an alternative to photocopying.

As much as the concept appeals to me, I just cannot make these patient education pieces work for me as well as I would like. The language is sometimes too difficult for many older patients to understand. Technical words are often used repeatedly when lay terms would be just as effective (eg, upset stomach could replace dyspepsia). All topics end with a section entitled "Notify our office if...," and many contain directions that are of little

practical value. For example, the sheet on thyroid nodules urges the patient to notify the office if "you note a swelling in your neck." If the patient did not already have a swelling, would they be given the information sheet? Finally, I would note that some of the most common medical problems (common cold, headache, urinary tract infection, and low back pain) are omitted.

I did not find the CD-ROM to be practical for use in a busy office. The special instructions feature that can be customized has to be retyped each time it is used and will not retain in memory the information about office address and telephone number. The information pieces cannot be personalized, nor can they have information added to them. There is no added value to the book by including the CD-ROM.

Charles E. Driscoll, MD
Lynchburg, Va