The author in the Preface quotes the adage, "If you don't think about it, you will never diagnose it." This manual clearly takes care of that issue as it directs one to consider quickly most of the common diagnoses associated with these 36 common symptoms. I took 3 days of initial office patient complaints and found 90% represented here. In addition to the expected chapters on headache, sore throat, earache, and cough, I found the chapters on forgetfulness, pain in the upper extremity, and pain in the lower extremity to be refreshing and of immediate practical use. Other chapters of interest included those concerning dizziness, insomnia, swelling of the legs, and vision problems.

The text is well organized, making it easy to access the information most important to the clinician, ie, that which adds to the patient's symptoms and moves to a supportable diagnosis. The 32-page index includes all the symptoms and complaints covered in the entire text, which turns out to be quite helpful in determining whether one should pursue a particular clinical concern. As intended, there is no attempt to include therapy in this forum; the reader is directed elsewhere to that end. Because the symptoms selected by the author are common, the experienced practitioner will likely not find the book a necessity, yet it certainly can serve as an effective adjunct in the clinic. Those earlier in their careers, on the other hand, might find this book an essential aid to establishing efficiency in office practice by avoiding the time spent in pursuit of similar content found in lengthy textbooks.

Differential Diagnosis of Common Complaints qualifies as a helpful addition to the clinician's office library.

James J. Bergman, MD
Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound
Bellevue, Wash

Neurology for Non-Neurologists. Fourth edition. *By Wigbert C. Wiederholt. 342 pp. Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders, 2000. $39.95 (paper). ISBN 0-7216-8874-8.*

Translations of the intricacies of specialty fields into clinical practicalities for the primary care physician are especially challenging but rewarding if done well. The specialist writer must interpret and organize the complexities of pathophysiology, differential diagnosis, and disease management in a fashion that is relevant for the physician in a demanding practice setting. The author of this fourth edition of *Neurology for Non-Neurologists* has crafted a work that clearly exceeds these expectations.

The first three chapters of this text include a review of clinical neuroanatomy, the neurologic history and examination, and ancillary methods of study for the evaluation of neurologic problems. The section on the mental status examination is particularly well presented. The remaining 16 chapters include focused discussions of specific neurologic symptoms or disease states, such as headache, cerebrovascular disease, muscle diseases, seizure disorders, Parkinson disease, dizziness and vertigo, and congenital anomalies and inherited disorders. The book contains multiple well-designed tables and an index, and each chapter features key references, which have been updated since the last printing in 1995.

The clarity of the language of this book is its primary attractiveness. Ranging from neurologic examination maneuvers or diagnostic tests to distillation of journal studies into practical correlates or to descriptions of medically appropriate treatment pathways, the author provides concise discussions using understandable terminology. For example, in the chapter reviewing cerebrovascular disease, the author outlines the characteristics of major types of stroke, the use of neuroimaging studies, and the applicability of current treatment interventions based on the specialty literature. Repeatedly, major points are emphasized clearly, and myths are criticized appropriately.

In summary, this text would be an important library addition for a broad reach of providers, including family medicine residents, practicing family physicians, and allied health professionals. Given the explosion of knowledge in the neurosciences and the rapidly increasing elderly population, the family physician will need well-written resources to evaluate a variety of neurologic signs and patient complaints. *Neurology for Non-Neurologists* will not only assist the practicing physician in initiating a diagnostic evaluation and treatment regimen, but will also facilitate appropriate referrals to the neurologist.

Kathryn M. Larson, MD
University of California, Irvine
Orange, Calif

20 Common Problems in Dermatology. *By Alan B. Fleischer, Jr, Steven R. Feldman, Aaron S. Katz, and Beth D. Clayton. 303 pp, illustrated. New York, McGraw-Hill, 2000. $34.95 (paper). ISBN 0-07-022067-0.*

Skin problems are common in family practice, so it is important to have a solid background and good references in dermatology. This book serves as a basic guide to the 20 most common skin diseases as determined by the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey.

The book is organized into four parts with one chapter for each of the 20 diagnosis. Inflammatory skin diseases are addressed by chapters on acne, atopic dermatitis, psoriasis, rosacea, and urticaria. Infectious skin diseases are covered by chapters on candidiasis, folliculitis, herpes simplex, HIV-related skin disease, impetigo, tinea, varicella zoster, and warts. Skin growths and tumors include epidermoid cysts and lipomas, melanoma, nevi, and other skin tumors, and miscellaneous skin diseases include alopecia, xerosis, and vitiligo.

The text reads easily and provides the basic knowledge required for most skin conditions encountered in family practice. The 159 photographs are clear, the 8 figures are drawn well, and the 24 tables are helpful. The information serves as a platform of basic dermatology. For instance, in Chapter 3 we are reminded that "psoriasis involves the hyperproliferation of the epidermis in combination with the activation of inflammatory pathways." In Chapter 14 the authors explain that "sebaceous

J Am Board Fam Pract: first published as 10.3122/15572625-13-5-390 on 1 September 2000. Downloaded from http://www.jabfm.org/ on 16 November 2026 by guest. Protected by copyright.