

for the health-oriented, international traveler. It is recommended as a handy guide for patients of family physicians.

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**Concise Textbook of Medicine. Second edition. Edited by Mabenur S. Kochar and Kesavan Kutty. 821 pp., illustrated. New York, Elsevier Science, 1990. ISBN 0-444-01497-7.**

Kochar and Kutty present this revised edition of their original *Textbook of General Medicine* to medical students to provide them with a course of internal medicine that could "be read cover to cover during a twelve-week rotation in medicine." The editors' expressed goal is to allow the student the opportunity to "acquire knowledge in that field considered essential to graduation from a medical school."

Indeed, both the format and content of this soft-covered volume direct itself specifically to the medical student in the clinical phase of education. The opening chapter, "The Art and Science of Medicine," clearly alerts the student to current thinking in the delivery and philosophies found in medical care. The concept of primary care, effective consultations with other specialists, physician and patient obligations to health care processes, approach to the patient's family, and a discussion of medical ethics highlight this refreshingly written introduction.

Thereafter the chapters follow the time-honored divisions into medical subspecialties (pulmonary medicine, gastroenterology), with an excellent geriatric medicine section added to the newly created chapters on psychiatry, medical genetics, and alcoholism and substance abuse. A 40-page index is complete.

Somewhat unique in this text is the ending to each chapter, which has a collection of challenging questions (answers provided) reviewing the material immediately presented. Brief and current bibliographies conclude each major topic. Figures and tables are somewhat limited, although the dermatology discussion provides numerous photographs, many in color.

The book is clearly written, and students will welcome the depth presented in each clinical area, much as clinicians in practice might appreciate a leaner, manual style approach often seen on office bookshelves. Both groups, however, will acknowledge the academic quality.

A sample chapter is "Infectious Diseases." The author discusses every clinical area: virus disease, bacterial infection, fungal and parasitic disease, organ system infections (pneumonia, meningitis, infectious diarrhea), antibiotics, acquired immune deficiency syndrome, fever of undetermined origin, immunizations, and travel medicine—all covered in about 50 pages of text.

The medical student on clinical rotation and, for that matter, the clinician in general can find in this text the fundamentals of internal medicine.

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**Problem-Oriented Pediatric Diagnosis. By Roger M. Barkin. 305 pp., illustrated. Boston, Little, Brown, 1990. \$22.50 (paper). ISBN 0-316-08102-7.**

This book is a recent addition to a series of Spiral Manuals™ offered by this publisher in a large range of clinical disciplines. As the title suggests, the focus is a problem-solving approach to the diagnosis of pediatric problems. The organization is by organ system, and the topics are listed by clinical presentation rather than by diagnostic entities, with some 47 actual symptoms having been selected. All aspects of

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### MIDWEST

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treatment or management are intentionally omitted in deference to the diagnostic focus of the book and in the interest of retaining a compact size. The result is largely a book of lists: lists of potential diagnoses for a given symptom, lists of questions to ask in the differential diagnosis, and lists of diagnostic tests to consider. The most serious deficiency with this approach is a lack of interpretive discussion to link the specific questions and tests to their respective diagnoses. Without knowledge of the entities or a second reference, this approach would encourage a shotgun type of work-up.

The pocket-sized spiral format suggests that this book is to be kept at hand for ready access for difficult diagnoses, but in that context, such as for the pediatric house officer, it would seem that the missing management information would be of equal importance. A reference of this type could just as conveniently be stored on the clinic bookshelf or in the ward station, and in a bigger format it could afford the luxury of larger graphics (some of the tables presented nearly require a magnifying glass to be read) and more direction at *how* to arrive at the correct diagnosis. Ironically, in spite of the effort to remain compact, there is considerable empty space on the pages, such as title pages that are entirely blank on both sides except for the title heading.

An appendix contains tables of drug dosages, normal laboratory values, and some growth grids, as well as an extensive section that gives a "Parental Instruction Guide" for some 36 alphabetized problems from abdominal pain to vomiting. While these pages contain some very useful information, it is not clear why they are included in this book. Each topic contains a section on "when to call your child's doctor"; yet to obtain the information, it would have been necessary to have already seen the doctor (or purchase the book, which is not otherwise directed at a nonprofessional audience). This section accounts for 65 pages of the book, which might have been used more appropriately to address some of the deficiencies noted above.

In general, this book appears to lack a clear sense of purpose. It seems to attempt to do both too much and too little. The pocket-sized format unnecessarily limits the content, and the parental instructions are not a relevant contribution to the topic of problem-oriented diagnosis. More guidance in working through a differential diagnosis and the inclusion of some of the management options would make this book more useful to the clinician and reduce some of the need to consult additional references.

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**Ob/Gyn Secrets.** Edited by Helen L. Frederickson and Louise Wilkins-Haug. 308 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, Hanley & Belfus, 1991. \$26.95 (paper). ISBN 0-932883-95-8.

*Ob/Gyn Secrets* is a handy reference to a wide range of topics in obstetrics and gynecology. The question-and-answer format used to address topics on general gynecology, reproductive endocrinology and infertility, gynecologic oncology, general obstetrics, maternal complications, the fetus, the placenta, and labor and delivery focuses on the common problems encountered in these areas.

The sections are organized, clinically relevant, and easy to read and transmit factual information with well-chosen illustrations. Each topic is thoroughly covered and includes in three to five pages a definition of the clinical problem, etiology, differential diagnosis, epidemiology, medical relevance, screening, evaluation, medical management, treatment, and prevention. The sections are referenced with 5 to 15 articles, including recent review articles.