

Book Reviews

Resources for People with Disabilities and Chronic Conditions. Lexington, MA, *Resources for Rehabilitation*, 1991. \$44.95 (paper). ISBN 0-929718-06-2.

This book "is designed to help individuals with disabilities and chronic conditions, their family members, and service providers find services and products that contribute to achieving the maximum level of independence possible. It provides information on a wide variety of organizations, publications, and assistive devices." These statements, made on the first page, are verified throughout the book. The organization of the book allows one to choose the condition about which he or she wants to learn and then to read an overview of the condition in layman's terms, a description of the psychologic aspects of the condition, where to find services, a list of organizations dealing with that condition, and which publications and tapes are available in that arena.

Family physicians encounter on a daily basis patients who are confronted with these disabilities and chronic conditions. They utilize the expertise of psychiatrists, occupational and physical therapists, and social workers, as well as others on the rehabilitation team. Having a book such as this would give the family physician another source of information gathered from a variety of areas.

I took the liberty of asking one of my wheelchair-bound friends to give me his opinion about the book. He said that it was a good reference for someone newly disabled and interested in a listing of possible resources of information and financial assistance. Although he is not recently disabled, he indicated that he could use this book as a reference, provided it is updated on a regular basis (it is).

When I first scanned the book, I noticed the use of advertising. I assume the decision to allow advertisements was made so the book could be offered at a lower price. I was concerned that the organizations, publications, and products listed were there because those organizations paid for the listing; however, many listings were for free activities and publications, so my concerns were allayed.

Resources for Rehabilitation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing training and information to professionals and the public about the needs of persons with disabilities and the resources available to meet those needs. In publishing the book *Resources for People with Disabilities and Chronic Conditions*, the organization has provided us with an excellent reference that should be in every family physician's office as well as in libraries and at other places of information.

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A Practical Guide to ECG Interpretation. By Ken Grauer. 394 pp., illustrated. St. Louis, Mosby Year Book, 1992. \$25.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8016-2159-3.

ECG Interpretation Pocket Reference. By Ken Grauer. 55 pp., illustrated. St. Louis, Mosby Year Book, 1992. \$8.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8016-2002-3.

In the preface to his book, *A Practical Guide to ECG Interpretation*, Dr. Grauer writes, "Why another book on electrocardiography . . . ? Our approach is different. We don't stress endless memorization of little-used (and all-too-easily-forgotten) facts. Instead we stress application of practical concepts encountered in the daily practice of most medical care providers." Even though this book was written especially for beginners in electrocardiography (ECG) interpretation, the companion booklet, *ECG Interpretation Pocket Reference*, is a useful reference for veteran as well as novice healthcare providers.

The *Practical Guide to ECG Interpretation* is divided into two major sections. Chapters 1 through 11 present the core content, a systematic approach to the interpretation of ECGs. Then chapters 12 through 21 contain additional information "for those who want to know more." Topics range from ECG changes in ischemia and pericarditis to nuances in children to how to recognize lead misplacement.

To facilitate learning, the *Practical Guide* includes multiple schematic tracings and clinical cases. Chapters 8, 22, and 23 are devoted to review; the explanations of the answers are easy to understand. The *Practical Guide* also makes liberal use of lists and highlighting to emphasize important points.

The most important figures and tables from the *Practical Guide* have been collected in the *Pocket Reference*. This booklet measures 14 × 11 cm (5.5 × 4.25 inches) so it easily fits into a laboratory coat pocket. The purpose of this book is to provide all the necessary information needed to interpret ECGs so that memorization is unnecessary. (Of course, as one interprets more ECGs, this reference guide will not be needed as often.) The figures and tables are numbered in correlation with the *Practical Guide*. Thus, it is easy to look up the corresponding text whenever the reader desires to refresh his memory concerning a certain concept.

These two books are well organized, clearly written, and nicely illustrated, and they effectively explain ECGs clearly without oversimplifying. The *Practical Guide* will not only be especially useful to students and residents first learning ECG interpretation, but it also will serve as a good refresher text. The *Pocket*

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Reference, however, will be useful to all family physicians who interpret ECGs.

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Essentials of Drug Therapy. By Gordon E. Johnson. 448 pp. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders, 1991. \$27.95 (paper). ISBN 0-7216-3020-0.

As new medications appear and as uses for old ones are modified or disappear, the physician must continually sift through journal articles, texts, and pharmaceutical promotional information to maintain optimal skills in drug therapy prescribing practices. Excellent resources are generally readily available to practicing family physicians, including *AMA Drug Evaluations* and the *Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties*. *Essentials of Drug Therapy* was designed as a practical book to help the busy practitioner place newer drug therapies in proper perspective.

The text is organized into 10 categories according to drug pharmacology: cardiovascular, renal, blood formation and coagulation, gastrointestinal, endocrine, respiratory, pain relief, neurologic, behavioral, and antiinfective. Each section is further divided according to common classes of drugs within that category. For example, the section on gastrointestinal drugs includes information on drugs used in the treatment of peptic ulcers, chronic inflammatory bowel disease, and nausea and vomiting. The index, which includes both generic and trade drug names, allows for easy reference.

The author has provided good information access by maintaining a constant format for discussion of each drug type. In each grouping there is a discussion of mechanism of action, pharmacologic effects, therapeutic uses, adverse effects, specific drug interactions, and doses, including highlights of adult, geriatric, pediatric, and maximum dosages. Additionally, each section is supplemented by a recommended reading list. The book contains no photographs, but the occasional tables, e.g., relative potencies of steroids, are useful.

In reviewing this text, it is important to consider the timeliness and accuracy of its information without becoming too involved in detail. For the most part, the information generally appears current and well-defined by an easily readable prose. There are areas, however, that the reader could call to question, including the section on estrogen replacement therapy, which does not discuss the use of continuous dose regimens of estrogen and progesterone; the section on topical creams for vaginal candidiasis, which lists 6 recommended days of therapy instead of 7; and the section on angiotensive converting enzyme inhibitors, which does not mention cough as a common side effect. Also, the reader could question whether the text has included those areas the physician would encounter commonly in a daily practice. Topics not included in the text, but which would be relevant to family practice, include, for example, antituberculosis therapy and prescribing recommendations for common drugs during pregnancy and lactation.

The author has written this book for the family physician, the "undifferentiated house officer" (a curious term), and the senior medical student or pharmacy student. These individuals will appreciate the basic framework of the text, but need to review the information continually in the context of current general works in family medicine and the more extensive cita-