

Book Reviews

Adventures in Medicine: One Doctor's Life amid the Great Discoveries of 1940-1990. By Sibley Hoobler. 109 pp. Cleveland, Case Western Reserve University, 1991. ISBN 0-963063-00-6.

This publication is a set of short stories that are meant to convey in lay terms the advances in medicine through which the author has lived. He states the book was written to "interest the student considering a career in health sciences and the intelligent lay reader who wants to be informed of recent medical advances." Reaching the second goal of informing the lay reader would probably be accomplished. Students considering careers in the health sciences might not be so enthusiastic about reading this book. The first section contains the author's autobiography, which was included to encourage his grandchildren to choose a career related to medicine. This very worthwhile goal would probably not be of interest to every reader.

The remaining chapters of the book were prepared as lectures to the Rowfant Literary Club of Cleveland. For those of us who were born before 1940, the stories help us to appreciate the important advances that have been made in medicine. The book can be helpful to physicians who are asked to give a lecture to a lay audience and who want to cite specific examples of medical advances and relate them to our present quality of health.

The organization of the lectures is not in any chronological order, and there are no illustrations. While the stories are very readable, except for their historical value, they have no specific relevance to the content of family practice. The book is geared to lay readers and does not add much to the literature or libraries of family physicians.

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Arthritis Therapy: A Clinician's Manual. By Thomas G. Kantor. 243 pp. Durant, Oklahoma, Essential Medical Information Systems, 1992. \$12.95 (paper). ISBN 0-929240-40-5.

Arthritis Therapy: A Clinician's Manual is the newest publication in the series of Center Index Texts by Essential Medical Information Systems. This 243-page book has been designed as a quick reference on the management of arthritis. It is divided into two major sections: general information about the arthritides and summary information about the drug therapies available through 1991.

The first 14 chapters are devoted to a discussion of 36 arthritic conditions, divided into 14 categories.

Each entry includes information on the clinical presentation, appropriate laboratory tests, and treatment options. This section is designed as a "memory-tickler." The reader must search other sources for detailed information concerning cause, laboratory tests, or therapies.

Nearly one-half the book is dedicated to the following types of drug therapies: first-line drugs, which include salicylates and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs); second-line drugs, which include gold, antimalarial medications, corticosteroids, penicillamine, and methotrexate; third-line drugs, which include alkylating agents and purine analogues; anti-gout medications, which include colchicine, allopurinol, and uricosuric agents; and pain medications. Each drug entry includes information on pharmacokinetics, adverse effects, and dosage. The subheadings, however, are not standardized.

Chapters 15 through 17 touch briefly on nondrug therapies for arthritis, particularly exercise. Chapter 17 lists sources of information about arthritis that are available to the public. The last chapter in the book briefly discusses how to assess response to treatment, both clinically and with laboratory tests.

One very useful feature of this manual is the blank page entitled Notes at the end of each chapter. In other respects, however, this book appears to be cheaply constructed. All of the headings are the same point size, which makes it difficult to separate the disease or drug being discussed from the subheadings. Although the beginning of each chapter is identified by a tab with the chapter number, the chapters are not numbered in the table of contents. Also, no index is available.

Some of the information appears to be misplaced. At the end of Chapter 1, which deals with rheumatoid arthritis, is Table 1.1, "NSAIDs Available in the U.S." It would seem more logical to place this table in Chapter 18, Introduction to NSAIDs. There are two sections on exercise therapy, one in Chapter 2, which deals with spondyloarthropathies, and the other in Chapter 15, which deals with rehabilitation. It would seem more logical to combine these two sections.

Although 214 references are listed at the end of the book, it is not always possible to determine the source of information in the text. For instance, in the discussion about estrogen replacement therapy for osteoporosis, the manual states, "Oral diethylstilbestrol at 5 mg daily for three weeks each month will usually suffice." Because this therapy is not uniform, a footnote would be helpful.

Although this book was written by a rheumatologist working in a tertiary care center, the author has