

# Book Reviews

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**Nutritional Influences on Illness: A Source Book of Clinical Research. Second edition. By Meklyn R. Werbach.** 700 pp. Tarzana, CA, Third Line Press, 1993. \$64.95. ISBN 0-9618550-3-7.

The author of this unique volume hopes that the reader will come away with a deeper appreciation of clinical nutrition and will be better able to "answer the many questions concerning nutrition being asked of health professionals by an increasingly sophisticated public." During the past 6 years I have used the first edition of this book many times to respond to questions from patients and colleagues about nutrition therapies that might be beneficial for certain diseases or symptoms. The second edition, which has been updated and expanded, should be of considerable interest and utility for family physicians and other health care professionals who are interested in the relation between nutrition and health.

In the second edition the author presents a disease-oriented, balanced guide to clinical research on 87 common illnesses. Each chapter presents a series of statements concerning a specific disease and nutrients relevant to that disease, with each statement followed by selected abstracts from the literature either substantiating or refuting it. This presentation allows the clinician to make decisions about nutrition therapy based on the strength of the scientific evidence. The abstracts are classified according to whether they are randomized trials, observational studies, open trials, animal experiments, clinical observations, or review articles. Although the author has chosen studies that he believes are "the best, the most relevant, and the most recent," his choices seem to be unbiased.

The author's introductory comments provide a useful sequence to help clinicians reach decisions about trying nutrition therapies. There are also seven fairly helpful appendices: Common Nutritional Deficiencies, Dangers of Nutritional Supplementation, Laboratory Methods for Nutritional Evaluation, Nutrient Bio-availabilities and Interactions, Signs and Symptoms of Abnormal Tissue Nutrient Levels, Signs and

Symptoms of Heavy Metal Toxicity, and How to Rule Out Food Sensitivities.

Overall I found this to be a well-organized, innovative, practical review of the literature regarding clinical applications of nutrition. This resource should be valuable for at least several years, by which time there will, I hope, be a third edition.

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**Ambulatory Medicine: The Primary Care of Families.** Edited by Mark B. Mengel and L. Peter Schwiebert. 647 pp., illustrated. Norwalk, CT, Appleton and Lang, 1993. \$23.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8385-1294-1.

*Ambulatory Medicine* is a problem-oriented text that describes the 66 most commonly encountered problems in family practice. Additional sections address selected chronic conditions, psychiatric disorders, reproductive health, and preventive medicine. The editors have maintained a standard outline format, which gives definitions, most common differential diagnoses, epidemiology, pathophysiology, symptoms, signs, laboratory evaluation, and treatment and follow-up for each topic. The consistent format makes the text easy to utilize quickly. The algorithms and charts are typically of excellent quality and are useful. The combination of alphabetical problem orientation, in-text cross-referencing, and an excellent index add to the usefulness of this text when time is limited. Occasionally the synthesis of the differential diagnosis must be done across the outlined topics, but this problem occurs only occasionally with certain diagnoses.

The audience best served for this text is the family practice resident in training or medical student. The busy office practitioner will find this volume to be a succinct review of common problems and might find the up-to-date list of references at the end of each chapter a good source for further information.

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