

Book Reviews

Atlas of Dermatology. Third edition. By Gernot Rassner. Translated and edited by Walter H.C. Burgdorf. 382 pp., illustrated. Mahvern, PA, Lea & Febiger, 1994. \$85. ISBN 0-8121-16011.

Here is a dermatology edition that combines exceptional clarity in color photography with enhanced text detail — both essential to the generalist in contemporary primary care practice. *Atlas of Dermatology* also presents a special appeal to the student and resident because it is brief yet entirely adequate and addresses every topic of importance in basic clinical dermatology. Additionally, more sophisticated topics are covered, such as inherited and congenital skin abnormalities and dermatologic manifestations of both systemic diseases and autoimmune disorders.

Before his discussion of specific pathology, Rassner devotes several pages each to the basic aspects of dermatology: Skin Structure and Function, the Dermatologic Patient, Cutaneous Pathophysiology, and the Classification of Skin Diseases. This introduction, so often neglected in dermatology manuals, proves helpful in orienting the student to the ensuing clinical aspects of dermatology. The author's minimal emphasis on the microscopic examination of dermatopathological specimens will be welcomed by most nondermatologists.

As implied by the title, the high-resolution color photographs (341) are the clear strength of this hard-bound volume. Every common diagnostic entity is represented — each with an immediately adjacent legend giving the differential diagnosis, a description of the typical clinical findings, and additional notes regarding the particular diagnosis. This atlas demonstrates a somewhat unusual style by elaborating essential elements at each diagnosis far more than do most other texts. As an example, for tinea infection, the biology of the fungus is presented, followed by the pathogenesis of the disease pattern, and then the diagnostic methodology and therapeutic modality, with one to several paragraphs concerning each area. This format is somewhat uniform as each entity is addressed throughout the text.

The book comprises 19 chapters, each of which addresses a distinct area in skin disease — inherited abnormalities, infections and infestations, allergic cutaneous disease, physical and chemical damage, tumors, pigment diseases, nail disease, cutaneous vascular disease, and diseases of the lips and oral mucosa, among many others. A subsection on psychodermatology is of particular interest to those in primary care. The 7-page dermatologic formulary in the Appendix adds a useful tool for the clinician; most topical and oral medications encountered in the management of skin disorders are covered in tabular fashion. A comment column details standard usage for each medication and provides the practitioner outstanding tips concerning the attainment of optimal therapeutic benefit. Side effects and complications are reviewed when appropriate.

Atlas of Dermatology should be considered a positive reference library addition for all students, residents, and practitioners in primary care medicine. The text reads clearly and is succinct. The author covers the broad base of primary dermatology thoroughly. The photographs are of exceptional quality, plentiful, and strategically placed adjacent to the text they illustrate. For these reasons the book is very helpful for office use as well as in board preparation.

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Current Pediatric Drugs. By Frederic D. Burg and Jeffrey A. Bourett. 228 pp. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders Company, 1994. \$25 (paper). ISBN 0-7216-4574-7.

This pocket-sized reference handbook is actually two books under the same cover. The first half consists of an alphabetical listing of medications used in pediatrics. Under each entry, in a concise yet readable presentation, are the trade name(s), the dosage forms, dosing information by age and weight, common side effects, interactions, and precautions for a long list of drugs. The advantages of using this reference rather than the *Physicians' Desk Reference* are its convenient size, the orientation to pediatric patients, and the editorial selection of clinically relevant information. This section gives information about 103 different drugs and is not restricted to antibiotics, as are some of the similar handbooks in this format.

The second half is a compilation of clinical tables that is intended to complement the drug information by listing the choices and indications for various medications in selected diagnoses and clinical conditions. These, too, are arranged alphabetically, range from allergy to vitamin supplementation, and cover 78 different situations. The value of this section is rapid access to a condensation of helpful clinical information in tabular form. The tables range in subject matter from cold medications to electrolyte content of major body fluids, infant fluid and parenteral nutrition requirements, topical ophthalmic preparations for a variety of conditions, medications used in pediatric psychiatric disorders, and drugs used for seizures. To be most useful, the user will require some familiarity with the contents; aside from the alphabetical ordering, there is no structure or predictability to the choice of selections.

This listing of drugs and clinical tables is intended to be used in conjunction with *Current Pediatric Therapy*, which is published by the same company and from which the tables have been excerpted. It certainly can stand on its own as a handy pocket reference to drug therapy. This edition of this manual is the first, and future editions might be improved by a more structured rendition of the clinical tables according to diagnostic categories, rather than by alphabet. Both