

for a nauseous drought. The wise, for cure, on exercise depend; God never made his work for man to mend."

The authors have given us a clear road map leading from illness to health. We would do well to share this travel guide with our patients.

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Endocrinology. Third edition. By Warner M. Burch. 216 pp. Baltimore, Williams & Wilkins, 1994. \$20 (paper). ISBN 0-683-01131-6.

The third edition (1994) by Warner M. Burch is the newest version of *Endocrinology* in the House Officer Series, published by Williams & Wilkins. Dr. Burch, who is currently Associate Professor of Medicine and Assistant Professor of Pharmacology at Duke Medical Center, comments in the Preface that the third edition is different from the first two in that the chapters have been expanded, and they were formatted by the publisher rather than the author. The approach is still the same: a convenient and practical "how to" and "why" source that can be used in both hospital and ambulatory settings by house officers, medical students, and primary care physicians. There is a list of references at the end of each chapter for those who would like to do further reading.

The first chapter of the book describes the most widely available tests to assess thyroid, pituitary, adrenal, and parathyroid function. The basic physiology involved and normal ranges are explained. The author also reviews specificity, sensitivity, and prevalence. The second chapter highlights signs and symptoms and treatment for eight endocrine emergencies.

The remainder of this 216-page book is devoted to 12 categories of endocrine disorders: diabetes mellitus, hypoglycemia, hyperlipidemia, pituitary disease, amenorrhea, impotence, hirsutism, gynecomastia, thyroid disease (both hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism), calcium disorders, metabolic bone disease, and adrenal disease. The discussion of each condition includes signs and symptoms, recommended work-up, and treatment options.

The reader should be aware of certain stylistic features. Dosages (for diagnostic tests and treatment) are usually given in terms of "the typical adult," which are sometimes difficult to extrapolate. Also, dosages are occasionally given in millimoles per liter instead of milliequivalents per liter. Generally, important points are highlighted with underlining; however, occasionally bold-faced type is used, for unclear reasons.

Dr. Burch's approach to the various conditions is very practical. For instance, when discussing the management of diabetic ketoacidosis, he comments that the method of insulin administration does not matter so long as the patient is frequently reassessed. In the discussion of outpatient management of diabetes, he emphasizes the importance of examining the patient's feet

at every visit. The culmination of the book is a chapter on how to evaluate the "weak and tired patient."

A logical approach to the weak, tired, dizzy, and gassy patient from the endocrine viewpoint is to ask specific questions that relate to possible hormone causes (see pp. 203 and 204). If the clinical index for suspicion of any endocrine diagnosis is low and laboratory results do not indicate a specific problem, then be honest with the patient. Give your opinion, but remember the fifteenth century proverb that summarizes the purpose of medicine: "To cure sometimes, to relieve often, to comfort always."

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Instructions for Patients. Fifth edition. By H. Winter Griffith. 598 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders, 1994 (paper). ISBN 0-7216-4930-0.

Six hundred titles of patient education materials regarding various medical diagnoses, diets, and physical therapy recommendations are presented in this soft-bound volume. Griffith's objective: "to provide quick, inexpensive, and effective supplements to personal contact" at the physician's office — "a time when patients are most motivated to learn."

One medical problem is presented on a single page, and each page is punched conforming to a standard three-ring binder. The diagnosis is first addressed with "basic information": a brief description, signs and symptoms, causes, preventive measures, and complications. Then "treatment" follows, subdivided into medication, activity, and diet recommendations. The discussion of each entity concludes with "notify our office if . . .," utilizing several lines directed at reminding patients of triggers that should prompt a call to the office for further assistance.

Generally speaking, the information and advice given in *Instructions for Patients* follow standard, traditional lines. Every common office diagnosis is covered (sunburn, viral pneumonia, menopause, head injury, hiccups, laryngitis, molluscum, diabetes, heart disease, and so forth). The author could probably have covered fewer topics, as many of them are somewhat uncommon, such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, carcinoid syndrome, cryptococcosis, hyperaldosteronism, and sporotrichosis. Some points in the presentations might prove less alarming if trimmed of information, such as that discussed in "brain tumors," which if not treated could result in death or permanent brain damage. Although these outcomes are, of course, true, patients, perhaps, would be better served if they were not reminded in print of something that most certainly already exists as a realistic fear.

All summaries are succinct and written in a style the patient can readily comprehend. Major strengths, es-