

# Book Reviews

## **Orthopaedics, Essentials of Diagnosis and Treatment.**

*Edited by Charles R. Clark and Michael Bonfiglio. 389 pp., illustrated. New York, Churchill Livingstone, 1994. \$59.95 (paper). ISBN 0-443-08807-1.*

Aching bones and joints seem to be a universal malady for those of us older than 40 years. Not surprisingly orthopedic complaints comprise about 10 percent of visits to most family physicians, and osteoarthritis ranks among the five most common chronic medical problems. Accordingly, one would expect a plethora of good texts that address primary care orthopedics. Such is not the case, however, and for this reason *Orthopaedics, Essentials of Diagnosis and Treatment* fills an important niche.

The text is divided into two major sections — Physical Diagnosis and Problems of the Musculoskeletal System. This format follows the typical pattern by which a clinician assesses a patient. The first chapter of Section 1 outlines a pragmatic approach to evaluating musculoskeletal injury. Subsequent chapters in the first section describe the examination of each joint. The final chapter of Section 1 reviews the use of radiology as an adjunct to diagnosis. Having collected this information, the clinician moves to the realm of specific orthopedic diagnosis.

Section 2 — Problems of the Musculoskeletal System — begins with a discussion of the pathophysiology of pain, a logical inclusion, because most orthopedic complaints center around painful joints. A discussion of specific fractures, soft tissue trauma, and problems specific to each anatomical area follows. Special chapters review sports injuries, pediatric problems, musculoskeletal tumors, and aspects of arthritis. A single chapter entitled Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation introduces the inexperienced clinician to a number of orthopedic devices but unfortunately fails to discuss salient principles behind the uses of orthoses and totally neglects the areas of rehabilitation.

The most useful portions of this book include most of the section on physical diagnosis; the chapter on orthopaedic radiology; and the chapters on fractures, soft tissue injuries of the hand, and evaluation of neck, back, and hip pain. Family physicians will appreciate that the emphasis in the Low Back Pain chapter is on understanding the injury through a thorough history. Weaker areas of the text include the pediatric orthopedic examination (although the chapter on specific pediatric problems is excellent) and the rather brief overviews of sports injuries and arthritis.

The text is richly supplemented with simplified anatomical drawings. The good use of pictures to demonstrate techniques of physical examination is also quite helpful. In addition, the chapters have numerous reproductions of radiographs, which do an excellent job of illustrating fractures, tumors, and arthritic changes.

This book is dedicated to Dr. Michael Bonfiglio, who during 40 years of teaching developed the orthopedic curriculum at the University of Iowa School of Medicine. The common-sense approach he advocates reminds us that good orthopedic care has been practiced since the time of Hippocrates. As the text advocates, physicians need a solid understanding of the anatomy of the musculoskeletal system and basic principles of healing. In an era of high-tech medicine many physicians might forget that the principles of orthopedic medicine were well established before the invention of radiology. In this regard experienced family physicians, residents, and students should find this text a useful guide to taking good care of musculoskeletal problems by relying on the time-honored skills of careful history and physical examination.

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**Differential Diagnosis.** *Edited by Jeremiah A. Barondess and Charles C.J. Carpenter. 993 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, Lea & Febiger, 1994. \$75. ISBN 0-8121-1446-9.*

*Differential Diagnosis* is a hardcover, 1.8-kg, 18×26-cm, 968-page, 5-cm thick text. With a couple exceptions, most chapters have few tables, figures, or other illustrations. The editors never specify the intended audience. Inferring from the substance of the material, its intended audience is elite academic internists, particularly those who become unbearable between issues of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, anxiously awaiting the thrill of discovery in the next "Case Record." I have difficulty envisioning many family physicians who would find *Differential Diagnosis* useful.

The editors set excellent goals in the Preface: "Clinical wisdom emerges as the result of the thoughtful and assiduous pursuit of excellence, not only in the gathering of clinical data, but in assigning appropriate weights to them, and in learning to assemble them . . . . In this book we have attempted to lay out this process." Continuing in Chapter 1 (Some Introductory Considerations), the editors appreciate "the distinction between *disease* and *illness*," illness being the subjective experience "that brings the patient to the physician, whereas it is disease that is usually sought in the diagnostic process." Further, they state that "disease and illness are not necessarily congruent; either may exist in the absence of the other." The concepts are family practice-friendly; the implementation is not.

Chapter 2, Medical Decision Making, should be a required chapter for *all* general textbooks of medicine; I applaud the editors for having the insight to include it; however, this *Differential Diagnosis* rendition of the topic is obtuse and lacks sufficient illustrative case material for those not already familiar with the concepts.

The remainder of the book is a hodgepodge of chapters, some dealing with symptoms (e.g., Chest and