

Book Reviews

Textbook of Family Practice, Fifth Edition. Edited by Robert E. Rakel. 1754 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders, 1995. \$115. ISBN 0-7216-4053-2.

Rakel's fifth edition contains 16 new authors among the 118 contributors. There are 66 chapters, and all have been updated. Some of the chapters from previous editions have been deleted, but there are some new ones, including "Practicing Bio-Psychosocial Medicine," "Domestic Violence," "Crisis Intervention in Office Practice," and "Personality Disorders in Office Practice." I do miss a chapter on office design, but the new chapters and the major revisions are a vast improvement. This textbook clearly serves the family practice and primary care community well in its scope and its practical applications.

The book is divided into five sections: "Principles of Family Practice," "Community Medicine," "Communication in Family Medicine," "Practice of Family Medicine," and "Management of the Practice." There are also five appendices: "The Interpretation of Laboratory Values," "Nomograms for the Determination of Body Surface Area," "Conversion of Apothecary Measures to Metric Equivalents," "Conversion of Pounds to Kilograms," and a "Table of Temperature Equivalents Celsius vs Fahrenheit."

Dr. Rakel's chapter on the history of family practice and the development of the specialty in the first section is particularly worthwhile reading for those interested in an overview of the specialty, its philosophy, and its historical evolution. There are obviously unique characteristics in this text that are not generally found in general medical textbooks, including the family's influence on health, the impact of divorce and remarriage on the family, and the psychosocial influences on health. Those chapters relating to the abuse of individuals and family members from the young to the old are also worthy of note and give the reader a clear understanding of their relevance in the primary care setting.

Family medicine, with its appropriate emphasis on prevention and health maintenance, is well covered in the chapters in Section Two of this excellent text. The chapters involving communication in the family practice setting are also useful and well covered in Section Three, where one can learn about practical interviewing techniques and verbal and nonverbal cues.

Section Four covers a broad range of the major clinical subjects in the conduct of everyday medical practice. The chapters are surprisingly thorough, yet succinct and pertinent. References are up-to-date and authoritative. The descriptions in these chapters reflect both the expertise provided by a specialist in the field and the family physician who devotes his or her principal attention to the primary care arena.

The negative points about this book are minor annoyances, but perhaps worth commenting on. The ta-

bles used throughout the text are highly informative, providing much practical information, but frustrating when on occasion a legend is not provided to explain the meaning of the initials used in some of the tables. Other frustrations include a failure to find a more detailed discussion of common ligamentous injuries to the knee, such as the diagnosis and management of the sprained anterior and posterior cruciate ligaments. When I looked for angiodysplasia as a cause of gastrointestinal bleeding, I found it in the chapter describing lower gastrointestinal bleeding, but it was not listed in the index. I was also surprised that there was no mention of chronic fatigue syndrome; even though it is a controversial subject, it is worth some discussion in a book such as this.

Some topics are repeated in more than one chapter. Because the chapters are written by different authors, there is a very difficult slant on some topics. For instance, the controversy regarding the use of prostate-specific antigen in diagnosing prostatic cancer is in the chapter on urinary tract disorders as well as in the oncology section.

Although the photographs used in this text are black and white, they are for the most part clear and illustrative of the clinical condition that is being explained. The clinical conditions that are discussed are very much to the point and well defined, and they capture the essence of what is regarded as important in the differential diagnosis and in management.

Rakel's fifth edition is comprehensive, yet compact, and covers the breadth of family medicine. This textbook is highly usable and well organized for family physicians and primary care physicians; clearly, it is a major contribution to the discipline of family medicine. The busy physician will consider it a friendly and worthy consultant.

Nikitas J. Zervanos, MD
Lancaster, Pa

Fractures and Dislocations: Closed Management. Volumes 1 and 2. By John F. Connolly. 1570 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders, 1995. \$135. ISBN 0-7216-2601-7.

In this two-volume textbook of orthopedics, Dr. Connolly emphasizes the closed management of fractures, respecting the injury that surgery itself does to normal bone repair processes. Furthermore, he points out that absolute immobilization is not necessary or even good for all fractures. When fixation is necessary, he recommends the least invasive procedures that will work. These principles are certainly of great interest to most primary care physicians.

The first chapter is devoted to general principles of fracture healing, complications, diagnosis, and acute care of the patient with fractures. The second chapter