

manual," and the *Harriet Lane Handbook of Pediatrics*. These books were and are directed at the busy resident and intern, who need quick access to reference and management information but cannot be dragging big reference texts around the hospital. I am not convinced that these factors play a role in the life of an ambulatory care physician. If I have a question about an internal medicine problem in my office, I can walk down the hall to my bookshelf and consult *Principles of Ambulatory Medicine*.

During the past few weeks I have tried to use the *Handbook of Ambulatory Medicine* as much as possible. Most of the time, however, I found myself going to the larger text for more in-depth information. In short, I do not think the environment in which I practice justifies the loss of information required to achieve a handbook of small size. Moreover, if this handbook indeed serves as a springboard to the larger text, then I need to own two books rather than one, which negates the cost-saving argument for the smaller book.

In sum, although I think the information in this handbook is excellent, it suffers in comparison with its mother text. In some fields handbooks are a necessity, but I am not convinced that office-based ambulatory care is such a field. Nevertheless, if one likes handbooks, the *Handbook of Ambulatory Medicine* contains a lot of good information taken from a widely used, well-respected text.

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Gellis & Kagan's Current Pediatric Therapy. Fifteenth Edition. Edited by Fredric D. Burg, Julie R. Ingelfinger, Ellen R. Wald, and Richard A. Polin. 894 pp. Philadelphia, WB Saunders, 1996. \$75. ISBN 0-7216-5016-3.

Gellis & Kagan's Current Pediatric Therapy, in its 15th edition, is under new editors. This standard reference is written by more than 400 contributing authors, each dealing with a particular area of expertise. The emphasis is on therapy, but diagnosis is not ignored. Therapeutic advice is very specific, describing each author's preference for treatment rather than a summary of the evidence for various treatment options. Cost is occasionally mentioned, but cost-efficacy balances and options are not a focus of this book.

I found the text well organized by body systems, with several layers of subheadings guiding the reader quickly to needed information. A variety of tables summarize the most important complex information. Advice includes practical measures for patient and parental education as well as specific therapy.

The book is comprehensive, presenting unusual and severe conditions along with those more commonly encountered, but it omits some common conditions family physicians often see. For example, I did not find information regarding enuresis or otitis externa. I did find the section on behavioral disorders to be particularly relevant to my practice, however, dealing with

such everyday issues as divorce, death, and learning difficulties.

In the middle of a practice day, the pediatrics book I want to consult most often should guide me in the diagnostic evaluation of problems I seldom encounter and remind me of drugs of choice and dosages for diseases I recognize but seldom treat. At other times I might want to consult a text that explores various sides of a controversy about treatment. This book is not intended for any of those purposes; it is more a manual to read at the end of a day to guide the therapy of an unusually sick child.

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Manson's Tropical Diseases. Twentieth Edition. Edited by Gordon C. Cook. 1779 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, WB Saunders, 1996. \$115. ISBN 0-7020-1764-7.

The importance of international health and tropical medicine has increased dramatically with the years. The world is rapidly becoming a global community because of increased travel and immigration and the spread of diseases related to poverty, malnutrition, and altered host defenses. It is now necessary for practicing physicians to consider, almost daily, diseases in their differential diagnosis that only a generation ago were regarded as curiosities. Furthermore, physicians are often asked to provide preventive care and advice to patients visiting a variety of foreign countries. Ominously, as global warming continues, it is likely that the viral, bacterial, protozoan, and helminthic diseases formerly found primarily in the tropics will affect an even larger proportion of the world's population, further challenging physicians' clinical acumen.

On the positive side, however, the physician has a superb reference available to serve as a guide through this sobering morass of afflictions. *Manson's Tropical Diseases* has been the classic text on international health and tropical diseases since 1898. In spite of its preeminent position, the current editor, Dr. Gordon C. Cook, has undertaken what he describes as a "radical overhaul." This 20th edition is a monumental effort spanning the fields of geographic medicine and tropical disease from the molecular pathogenesis of malaria to the public health aspects of vector control. This multiauthored textbook of primarily British contributors is well written, consistently edited, and a pleasure to read. Each chapter is clearly divided with easily located subheadings. The text is extensively illustrated with maps, diagrams, drawings, histopathologic sections, radiographic presentations that are carefully reproduced and easy to interpret, and a large number of clinical photographs, many of which are in color.

In addition to thorough coverage of infectious diseases, practical advice is provided in such diverse topics as orthopedic problems, unique psychiatric disorders encountered in tropical countries, environmental issues, including the serious health hazard of smoking,

and nutrition-associated diseases. There are practical guides to identifying parasites, insects, mosquitoes, nematodes, and arachnids; tables describing vaccines for travelers and the expected duration of protection; and a variety of helpful hematologic values such as the prevalence of anemia by geographic region and age-sex category. The 204-page appendix includes a section on radiology and imaging services in the tropics as well as basic laboratory diagnostic procedures for the clinician working in remote areas.

Although this book is also intended for the primary care worker, much of the material might be too detailed. It would be preferable to have a text specifically oriented to those providers who are the backbone of health care in many developing countries. In view of the global increase of the aging population, a section on geriatrics would strengthen the text. The chapter on surgery and obstetrics could be improved by providing more information on dealing with emergencies, and a quick reference of country-specific disease prevalence would be useful to the busy physician.

Manson's textbook is especially suited to physicians who provide health care to recent immigrant populations or travelers and to physicians or medical students planning to practice or train in tropical countries. Its price is relatively modest considering its voluminous coverage and superb handling of the subject matter of tropical medicine. Although this book is not likely to find its way to the bookshelf of every family physician, it is an invaluable resource and should be available in an easily accessed reference library.

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Cardiac Drug Therapy, Fourth Edition. By M. Gabriel Khan. 426 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, WB Saunders, 1995. \$39 (paper). ISBN 0-7020-1996-8.

The title is straightforward, and the text delivers what it promises. Printed in a compact and economical handbook form, this useful reference serves as a single source for a variety of types of information related to medical management of a variety of adult cardiac diseases. It would not only prove useful to the practicing internist or family physician but would also be a welcome resource on the telemetry and cardiac care areas of the hospital.

The 15 chapters take on two major and two minor themes. Chapters 1 through 4 and chapter 13 review specific classes of cardiac drugs. Mechanisms of action, dosage, indications and contraindications, and precautions are discussed. Where the book contributes to an understanding of specific pharmacology, pathophysiology is also reviewed. Chapters 5 through 12 deal with the management of specific disease entities in cardiology—from hypertension and hyperlipidemia, to ischemia and infection, to disorders of rhythm and func-

tion. Whereas drug therapy is the emphasis of the text, decision points and indicators for diagnostic evaluations and other therapeutic modalities are appropriately included. The final two chapters review cardiac drugs in pregnancy and lactation and the effects of drug interactions.

This book is written to be used by most of the English-speaking world. This lofty objective certainly intersects some interesting perspectives; it also creates some potential problems. As we are all aware, considerable regional differences in practice are not uncommon. When spanning oceans and borders, practice differences are also encountered. Specific examples of variance include recommendations for management of unstable angina. The author discusses studies of the use of heparin in this condition, but no recommendation is made. Throughout most of the United States, such treatment with heparin is considered dogma. In general terms the Canadian and British experience with nationalized health systems is evident: costs are not directly discussed, but the recommendations reflect their consideration, and invasive diagnostic tests and therapies are recommended mostly as a final resort. The use of international trade names and inclusion of medications not available in the United States might confuse the American user.

The text is clear, readable, well organized, and supported by charts, algorithms, and tables that contribute to our understanding. It will be valuable in assisting in day-to-day patient management decisions.

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Health Promotion and Disease Prevention in Clinical Practice. Edited by Steven H. Woolf, Steven Jonas, and Robert S. Lawrence. 618 pp., illustrated. Baltimore, Williams & Wilkins, 1996. \$35 (paper). ISBN 0-683-09270-7.

Health promotion and disease prevention are logical public health strategies but have not been a part of the national health policy until recent years. Certainly it is more effective, from both societal and personal perspectives, to prevent diseases or detect them early in their natural history than to bear the tremendous costs for treatment of chronic disease and for intensive care for late-stage conditions. The paradigm shift precipitated by managed care also calls for the physician to embrace and provide health promotion procedures and counseling within his or her practice. *Health Promotion and Disease Prevention in Clinical Practice* offers a timely and critical reference for the clinician. It reminds us of the need to provide health promotion amidst practices of medicine that often seem episodic and discontinuous.

This extremely well-written text is divided into three major sections. The first section discusses gathering information about risk factors during the history and physical and laboratory examinations. Included are particularly practical offerings such as how to ask