

sonable job of achieving their goals. The authors are knowledgeable and well prepared to write about their respective subjects, though authors with a wider geographic distribution (all were from the northeastern United States) might have provided a broader view of the topics. The chapter titled "The Provider's Perspective," for example, was written by an internist from an academic medical center.

The first half of the book reviews the fundamental elements of managed care for the practicing physician: definitions, reimbursement arrangements, and financial and clinical assessments of practice. Though accurate in content, the chapters, written at a very basic level, were long and often boring. The chapter on financial assessment (Chapter 6), however, did contain an excellent review of activity-based costing methods of cost accounting.

"Clinical Outcomes" (Chapter 9) was a well-written overview of this important topic. The following chapter on quality improvement proved to be disappointing—comprehensive yet rambling. The strongest chapters in the book were Chapters 11 and 12 on the legal implications of managed care. The authors here provide a thorough and understandable presentation of the legal minefields facing physicians in managed care and integrated physician organizations.

*Positioning Your Practice for the Managed Care Market* provides a solid overview on a complex subject. The book will provide a nice reference to the practicing physician who has little background in managed care and should serve as a learning tool for medical students and residents as well.

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**Differential Diagnosis of Common Complaints. Third Edition.** By Robert H. Seller. 407 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders, 1996. \$29.95 (paper). ISBN 0-72165808-3.

As stated in the book's Preface, patients generally come to their physician's office with varying complaints or symptoms rather than with specific diagnoses. This new edition paperback provides a framework for trying to sort out the myriad of diagnostic possibilities that arise from a certain specific symptom. Its usefulness to primary care physicians should be obvious, especially in today's medical climate, where they act as gatekeeper and see the patients on the front line, compared with years ago when patients might have sought out a specialist they thought would handle their complaint.

The author addresses 36 of the most common complaints patients have when seeing their physician. Topics include abdominal pain, cough, forgetfulness, dizziness, fatigue, chest pain, gynecologic problems, extremity pain, and weight issues, with a separate chapter dedicated to each complaint. The chapters are subdivided into sections to provide a diagnostic decision-making framework for the specific complaint. The

sections include a general description of the problem, the nature of the patient and the symptoms, associated symptoms, precipitating, aggravating, and ameliorating factors, physical findings and diagnostic tests, and less common diagnostic considerations. The chapters are well laid out and have easy-to-read tables that take the reader through a concise differential diagnosis of the more common causes of the specific symptom. References are provided at the end of each chapter, and a thorough index is included. Other helpful tables and illustrations are found throughout the chapters.

A major drawback of this text is that, in general, treatments and therapeutics are not discussed, but this information can easily be found in other texts that most practicing physicians would have on hand.

This book can be used by physicians, residents, medical students, and other medical personnel. I would highly recommend its use by medical students during their initial clinical rotations. Despite possibly sounding like it would have limited usefulness to a seasoned practicing physician, this text does live up to its title and can be a useful resource when in doubt about a particular patient. The text can reassure or suggest more directions to pursue.

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**Consultations in Gastroenterology.** Edited by William J. Snape, Jr. 968 pp., illustrated. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders, 1996. \$125. ISBN-7216-4670-0.

In this first edition, Dr. Snape attempts to create a text that will meet most needs of the primary care physician. He has designed this book "...to sit by the generalist's hand and provide guidance for the care of their patient" regarding gastrointestinal disease. This statement alone will catch the eye of primary care physicians who are interested in having the right gastroenterology text at their fingertips. The author hopes that this book will "fill the niche" as a useful resource and "how-to manual for treatment."

The book is divided into 7 separate sections. The sections are organized into chapters written by one of the 208 authors, each of whom has recognized expertise in the condition or disease. The first section, entitled "General" contains 23 chapters addressing the most common gastrointestinal complaints and symptom complexes encountered by primary care physicians (eg, nausea and vomiting, dyspepsia, chronic constipation, fecal incontinence, diarrhea). There is even discussion of some common pediatric topics (eg, "Foreign Bodies in Children," "Gastrointestinal Tract Hemorrhage in Children"). The chapters give full coverage of each topic, ranging from pathophysiology, diagnostic strategies, and differential diagnoses to appropriate treatment strategies.

The remaining sections are organized by specific organ systems: esophagus, stomach, intestinal tract, pancreas, and hepatobiliary tract, with each section con-