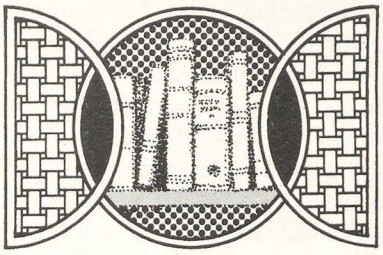
Book Reviews



The Care and Management of the Sick and Incompetent Physician. *Robert C. Green, Jr, George J. Carroll, William D. Buxton. Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois, 1978, 101 pp., $8.50.*

This is a thorough, timely, and concise volume addressing a problem that is both important and perplexing. The recognition, treatment, and discipline of the incompetent physician "has long been under the jurisdiction of the medical profession and methods of control have been ineffective and infrequently utilized." The significant literature relating to the subject is summarized and some of the authors' experiences on the Virginia State Medical Board are presented.

Specific problems leading to professional incompetence are presented in some detail. These include:

drug and alcohol addiction
psychiatric problems
behavioral disorders
failure to keep current.

Etiologic mechanisms of these problems are discussed. Of particular interest to me is the finding that, in most cases, a pattern of abnormal behavior was present before admission to medical school.

There is a comprehensive and chronological presentation of the efforts of organized medicine to recognize, define, and remediate the problem, starting with the Darling case in 1965 and following through to the programs instituted by the AMA, the Problem Doctor Rehabilitation Program in Washington State, and the program of the Virginia State Board of Medicine. The excellent work going on in Virginia is presented in considerable detail.

This book is unique in that it not only clearly and concisely defines the problem, but also presents descriptions of programs that offer solutions to the perplexing and important problem of the incompetent physician. It will be valuable for physicians in every discipline in medicine.

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The Surgical Neonate: Evaluation and Care. *Howard C. Filston, Robert Izant, Jr. Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, 1978, 246 pp., $12.50.*

This softcover book is stated to be an "introduction to the management of the surgical newborn." A further stated objective is "how to anticipate, recognize, and evaluate a neonatal surgical problem, expedite preoperative preparation, and intelligently manage postoperative care."

The organization of this book is by problem orientation and is well presented. Section 1 presents a good view of pediatric electrolyte problems. In addition, it offers an

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excellent approach to monitoring and support techniques as well as the outline for the essentials of transportation. Section 2 provides an approach to the surgical neonate by presenting such congenital anomalies as respiratory distress and abdominal mass. These first two sections were designed to provide a background of knowledge about the general care of the newborn infant and to facilitate the diagnostic evaluation of the infant from the presenting symptoms. These objectives are well met.

Section 3 was "added to provide a quick reference outline of the overall management of the most common entities seen in pediatric surgery." Each entity discussed has a section for "resuscitation and transportation requirements" and "proper handling." Although it is not an in-depth discussion, but rather a management outline, the subjects are well covered and well fulfill the authors' intent. Excellent reference lists are provided for most topics covered in this book.

This is an excellent ready reference book for family physicians involved in newborn pediatric care. It should be available in every delivery room suite and newborn nursery. It is a good one!

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AMA Drug Evaluations (3rd Edition). *AMA Department of Drugs. PSG Publishing Company, Littleton, Massachusetts, 1977, 1327 pp., $29.50.*

Now in its third edition, *AMA Drug Evaluations (AMA-DE)* represents a collaborative effort of the AMA Department of Drugs, the American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, and their consultants. A 40-page introductory chapter reviews such topics as prescription labeling practices, drug interactions, drug abuse and addiction, regulatory agencies, and use of drugs during pregnancy and in nursing mothers. Subsequent chapters are organized by therapeutic use. Each chapter has an introduction that reviews the overall therapeutic category. This is followed by individual drug monographs which average about a page in length. The last chapter is an alphabetical table of drugs and the laboratory tests each is known to interfere with. Drugs are indexed by both their generic and trade names, and a separate index of adverse drug reactions is an additional useful feature.

This text is clearly written and oriented to the practicing physician. *AMA-DE* recognizes or refutes the uses of drugs irrespective of their approved labeling status. Both single entity and combination products of major importance are reviewed. An attempt has been made to limit discussion to the clinically significant side effects and to give some index as to the relative frequency of these reactions. Drugs are also compared to each other with respect to indications, effectiveness, and side effects. Criticisms of the text include the lack of references and absence of any information on the absolute or relative drug cost. *AMA Drug Evaluations,* however, is perhaps the most useful of all drug reference books and belongs on the desk of every family physician.

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Handbook of Endocrine Tests in Adults and Children. *Robert N. Alsever, Ronald W. Gotlin. Year Book Medical Publishers, Chicago, 1976, 283 pp., $8.95 (paper).*

This pocket-sized book is directed towards medical students, house staff, and practicing physicians. The purpose of the book was to compile in a simple-to-use, single source, relevant information regarding endocrine testing procedures and normal values. The book does not attempt to provide any clinical information on the various endocrine conditions tested for and so states at the beginning.

There are seven chapters, the first being an introductory chapter, "How to Use the Book," with information concerning collection of samples for testing. The second chapter is on the "Hypothalamic-Pituitary Axis." Chapter 3 is on "The Thyroid Gland," Chapter 4 "The Parathyroids," Chapter 5 "The Endocrine Pancreas," Chapter 6 "The Adrenal Gland," and Chapter 7 "The Gonads." There are numerous, very useful tables where much practical, pertinent information is summarized. Examples include drugs and diseases altering thyroid tests, foods with high calcium and phosphorous content, and clinical stages of puberty in males and females. Some of these tables are difficult to read because of the small print necessitated by the pocket size of the handbook.

I have been using this book in my own practice over the last few months and have found information easy to retrieve, useful in application, and by and large quite relevant to the everyday family practice spectrum of patient problems. Another pertinent addition to this book is an appendix of cost estimates of selected endocrine laboratory tests which are commonly done. This type of information is usually omitted from the most standard texts and yet should be an essential consideration in the education of practicing physicians and medical students alike. This is a useful, handily packaged, and practical book to have in one's office armamentarium or readily available to physicians-in-training.

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Current Pediatric Therapy (8th Edition). *Sydney S. Gellis, Benjamin M. Kagan. W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1978, 879 pp., $30.00.*

This new edition of a standard reference textbook has been completely revised and updated, while keeping the same familiar and easily readable format. Two thirds of the contributors are new to the book, making it desirable to keep older editions for additional viewpoints and alternate management plans. In general, the 339 articles seem better organized and easier to follow than in the previous edition, enhancing the book's value as an on-the-spot reference. The newest drugs and treatment regimens are included, in easily accessible form. Especially valuable are the new sections on such timely subjects as mucocutaneous adenopathy syndrome and acetaminophen intoxication. New sections on informed consent in pediatric practice, parent education for accident prevention, and air travel reflect the changing pediatric scene.

This book belongs on every family physician's reference bookshelf.

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