BOOK REVIEWS

Handbook of Pediatric Orthopedics (12th edition). *Stanley M. K. Chung. Van Nostrand, Reinhold Company, New York, 1986, 270 pp., $42.95.*

The goal of this book is an excellent one—a reference manual and handbook with the subject matter organized to find immediate answers to clinical problems. Each chapter begins with a box of headings in alphabetical order, numbered to correspond with their sequence in the chapter. Each chapter ends with a summary, including a list of diagnoses, the treatment of each, and complications and pitfalls associated with each. The plan is promising.

The execution, however, is uneven and clumsy. The text is often confusing, as, for example, in the descriptions of and treatment recommendations for "tidy" and "untidy" wounds. There is an unreality about some treatment recommendations. Ice massage is advised for contusions and hematoma, applied by using "five or six ice cubes in a plastic bag." Careless remarks are frequent. In the multiple-injured patient we are advised, "if he cannot turn over, palpate the spinal process to see if tenderness is present." The battered child and the "shaken" child are used interchangeably.

Line drawings by the author's son are numerous and are often effective and appropriate. Some are simplistic, and several are misleading or incorrect (Figures 4b-3, 4b-7, and 4b-10).

In the final analysis, what limits the usefulness of this book is its lack of direction. Listings of laboratory tests appear with little relation to clinical settings and with inadequate recommendations about the sequence in which they are appropriate. Advice on differential diagnosis is often diffuse: priorities are not defined. Treatment recommendations are no better. In discussing the management of infection of the vertebral body or disc space, bed rest, heat, and massage head the list. No sense of urgency is conveyed. Follow-up of the limping child in whom "no diagnosis can be made after the first visit and series of diagnostic tests" is recommended in two to three weeks. That is a long time for an undiagnosed limp.

There is a lot of useful information, but this book could be a minefield to the uninitiated.

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Urban Family Medicine. *Richard B. Birrer (ed.). Springer-Verlag, New York, 1987, 287 pp., $65.00.*

The urbanization of America in conjunction with the increasing role of family medicine in caring for the urban population makes imperative a textbook on urban family medicine. This text is a good first effort to create such a reference. Parts of the book are relevant and well done, while other sections contain only standard family medicine concepts attached to the word "urban."

The chapters on compliance (an unfortunate term discussed by the author), the urban high-risk patient, the urban adolescent, the urban elderly, psychiatry, epidemiology, community resources, home visits, urban community diagnosis, practice options, and graduate training for urban family practice are particularly relevant. They address the unique characteristics and challenges of practice in a large city. The chapter entitled "Families of Mexican Descent: A Contextual Approach" will assist physicians to work with any culture different from their own. A section

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on working with interpreters is noticeably absent, however.

The chapter on family medicine research concentrates on traditional quantitative approaches, ignoring naturalistic, qualitative methodologies that are equally valid for research in family medicine.

The book would be more readable (and perhaps less expensive) with the elimination of repetition and content not relevant specifically to urban practice. For example, information in the chapters on the periodic health examination could be combined effectively with material from the chapter on screening. The chapter on working with family systems and biopsychosocial problems repeats components of the section on the urban family. Most of the material on families is highly theoretical and dense.

In summary, the subject of urban family medicine is important and timely. *Urban Family Medicine* contains many laudable elements. Improvements in subsequent editions could make it a classical basic text for students, residents, and practitioners.

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Vaccination Certificate Requirements and Health Advice for International Travel. *World Health Organization, Geneva, 1987, 83 pp., $8.40 (paper).*

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This annually updated World Health Organization booklet is invaluable for physicians advising patients about the health consequences of international travel. In general terms it describes what people can do to reduce the risk of transmissible diseases and illness while traveling. For example, avoid fatigue, excessive sun exposure and alcohol, and uncooked vegetables and thin-skinned fruits. Specifically, the booklet details the immunization requirements for entry into 199 countries, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, and one can readily determine the most current requirements for immunizations against cholera or yellow fever.

The authors reduce the complexities of malaria prophylaxis to simple principles. Specific prophylactic agents are recommended by geographic location with mention given to the degree of drug-resistant strains. The extent of malaria risk as well as peak seasons of risk are provided.

A five-page table at the end of the booklet lists certain food- and waterborne diseases, their mode of transmission, and geographic occurrence. This segment accentuates the concise, practical, well-organized nature of the book. Its contents are essential to those serving to advise people on healthy international travel.

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