

1987 Year Book of Family Practice. Robert E. Rakel, (ed). *Year Book Medical Publishers, Chicago, 1987, pp. 612, \$42.95. ISBN 0-8151-7017-3.*

Reading and applying information found in the *1987 Year Book of Family Practice* can facilitate the busy physician's desire to practice excellent patient care. The 11th edition of the *Year Book* seeks to tap the world medical literature, withdraw significant advances, and present the information in a concise, practical fashion. This endeavor is useful because the average family physician lacks the resources to review the 679 journals purportedly examined by the editors.

Each of the 400 articles selected for this year's edition are characteristically summarized and editorialized on only one page for easy reading. Occasionally, figures graphically summarize the article. The summaries are uniformly clear and concise. The editorials generally supplement the primary article's content with other referenced material. I was occasionally left wondering, however, where fact left off and anecdote began.

The *1987 Year Book* serves the busy clinician well. Its accomplished editorial staff cast a wide net to harvest practical information of concern to primary physicians intent on staying current with expanding medical knowledge. Using the *Year Book* while maintaining one's own professional reading, consulting on perplexing patient problems, and attending focused continuing medical education conferences provides a good start for family physicians to keep up to date.

*T. Rich McNabb, MD
Scenic General Hospital
Modesto, California*

Textbook of General Medicine and Primary Care. John Noble (ed). *Little, Brown and Company, Boston and Toronto, 1987, 2,376 pp, \$85. ISBN 0-317-53603-6.*

This easily used encyclopedic textbook is intended to be the reference of choice for primary care physicians in the office, the clinic, and the emergency room. Organized into four major sections, the compendium provides generous illustrations, diagrams, and tables. With the exception of an excellent section on the medical care of hospitalized surgical patients, the text deals exclusively with the management of ambulatory patients, the principles to be followed, and the pitfalls to be avoided.

The first section, "The Primary Care Patient," presents good discussions on interview techniques, psychosocial implications of care, medical genetics, primary care and the law, and occupational and environmental health.

The section on emergencies opens with an overview of emergency medical systems and the training levels of various paramedical personnel. Twelve crisply written chapters cover the full spectrum of problems that are present in the emergency room. Other than the chapter on emergency treatment of infants and children, there is no inclusion of pediatric medicine in this text. Since many primary care physicians are confronted by the need to manage children of all ages, brief chapters on well-child care and the management of usual childhood diseases would have been useful.

Section III addresses the full range of topics normally found in a medical textbook. Very helpful chapters have been written on hematology, derma-

tology, soft tissue rheumatism, and headaches among many others. Unexpected are the superbly done unique chapters on dental and ears, nose, and throat medicine.

The final section contains practical approaches to the management of the surgical patient, the adolescent, the geriatric patient, and others in special circumstances.

This text meets the objectives of the editor well. Primary care physicians will reach for it frequently.

*D. Stratton Woodruff MD
Thomas Jefferson University
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania*

Pediatrics (18th Edition). Abraham M. Rudolph (ed). *Julien I. Hoffman. Appleton & Lange, Norwalk, Connecticut, 1987, 1952 pp. \$85.00. ISBN 0-8385-7796-7.*

This textbook of pediatrics serves as an excellent reference source of general pediatrics, covering the wide range of childhood diseases. The classical presentation of disease, according to body systems, is utilized. The discussions of the diagnostic and therapeutic aspects of diseases are concise and well written. The presentations of biological mechanisms underlying the diagnosis and management of disease are easily understood. What this book attempts to accomplish, it does well.

From the perspective of a primary health care professional (pediatrician, family physician, nurse practitioner, or medical student) there are several important limitations.

The information presented is oftentimes fragmented so that one is required to look in more than one location to put together a comprehen-

continued on page 334

continued from page 332

sive thought process for a single classical presentation. For example, the subject of immunization is covered primarily under each separate disease with only a very brief description of the general topic under its own heading.

The most common presentation to the clinician is by signs and symptoms, and there is little available in this text addressed to the overall clinical presentation with specific suggestions for evaluation and treatment.

A large number of areas of importance to primary care physicians are inadequately discussed in this text. Some of these include day care health issues, adolescence, screening in pediatric practice, and family and psychosocial issues involved in health care.

With an understanding of its limitations, this text is an excellent addition to the primary care library.

Louis Menachof, MD
Santa Rosa, California

Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine, Eleventh Edition, Companion Handbook. Eugene Braunwald, Kurt J. Isselbacher, Robert G. Petersdorf, Jean D. Wilson, Joseph B. Martin, Anthony S. Fauci (eds). McGraw-Hill, New York, 1988, 791 pp., \$21.95 (paper). ISBN 0-07-07264-7.

Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine Companion Handbook endeavors to provide a pocket-sized reference that "residents and students can use on their trek through the inpatient, outpatient, and emergency services of a teaching hospital" when accessibility or time precludes consultation of the larger *Harrison's*. The 7 × 4 × $\frac{15}{16}$ -inch, 14-ounce manual is divided into chapters keyed to comparable parts of the larger edition.

The *Handbook* provides a nice overview of historical features, physical findings, laboratory abnormalities, differential diagnoses, potential complications, and therapies of medical conditions. When evaluating the

Handbook on inpatient rounds, however, the house officers and I found the therapeutics sections sketchy. We also found many minor annoyances: phenacetin was listed as an analgesic, complete with dosage and interval, indomethacin dosage was described as 50 to 75 mg every four hours, isoproterenol was listed as being equal to albuterol for inhalation therapy in asthma, status asthmaticus was defined as "obstruction persisting for days or weeks" rather than defined by severity and recalcitrance to therapy, there was a misprinted nitrogen balance equation, and so forth.

This *Handbook* is a first edition. With deletion of drugs of historical interest and provision of specific, detailed therapeutic information, this volume has great future potential. Because therapeutics handbooks seem to be what house staff desire in their pockets, I doubt this book, in its current form, will become as familiar a pocket reference as the *Manual of Medical Therapeutics* ("Washington Manual") or the *Harriet Lane Handbook*. Currently, this book will be useful to medical students and to house officers who need a fast refresher prior to rounds, patient encounters, or examinations.

Gary N. Fox, MD
The Reading Hospital and
Medical Center
Reading, Pennsylvania

Alcoholism: A Guide for the Primary Care Physician. Henrietta N. Barnes, Mark D. Aronson, Thomas L. Delbanco (eds). *Frontiers of Primary Care Series*, Mack Lipkin, Jr., (ed). Springer-Verlag, New York, Berlin, Heidelberg, 1987, 229 pp., price not known. ISBN: 0-387-96545-9.

This readable book was written for primary care physicians who will find its 25 chapters packed full of pertinent and practical information to improve their management skills in the area of substance abuse, primarily alcoholism. The well-organized format

makes it suitable for both a study and a reference source for medical students, residents, and family physicians in the early detection and possible treatment protocols of alcohol abuse. The series editor plans to report fundamental and applied research findings in clinically relevant, readable ways to meet the needs of overlapping groups of practitioners, teachers, and researchers in primary medicine. The editors of this book set out not only to illustrate through the experiences of primary care physicians the approaches in making the diagnosis of alcoholism and the methods of discussing the diagnosis with the patient and instituting treatment primarily in the physician's office, but also to emphasize the importance of the primary physician's involvement in the hospitalized patient. In my opinion the editors of this book have succeeded well in their objectives, making this work especially relevant to family physicians.

The book is divided into free-standing sections for the discussion of seven topics dealing with alcoholism: general concepts, clinical pharmacology, primary care, community resources, medical complications, special populations, and ethical and legal issues. The readers will learn how to deal with their own feelings of frustration when seeing a reluctant patient who, unlike the usually receptive patient, does not appreciate the offer, or may flatly refuse, to accept the offer of help. The illustrations are practical case histories that demonstrate tools for screening (the CAGE questions), diagnosis (MAST questionnaire), how to present the diagnosis, and then how to negotiate the treatment. The special population groups section will help family physicians deal with the family members of alcoholism and also understand how the cultural and family background affect his patient.

I wish this book had been available during my 24 years in family practice. I recommend the book to busy practicing physician and residents as an efficient reference text.

Reuben B. Widmer, MD
Green Valley, Arizona