

A Desktop Guide to Computers in Business. Patrick Cargill (ed). GreenTree Press, St Joseph, Mo, 1990, 300 pp, \$29.95. ISBN 0-9626385-3-6.

A Desktop Guide to Computers in Business is a practical introduction to personal computers, specifically IBM-compatible models. The author states that "the text is written with the beginner in mind but can be useful to the intermediate user." Contents include a brief history of and introduction to the personal computer, descriptions of each of the hardware components of a system (computer, monitor, keyboard, mouse, modem, printer), and an explanation of the intended functions and features of the most popular types of software programs (word processing, accounting, spreadsheet, graphics, database, communications, and utility packages). Additionally, tips on purchasing, lists of major vendors, and the process of computerization are outlined. Containing 19 chapters in 5 sections, the book is bountifully illustrated with large black-and-white line drawings.

Unlike many 300-page texts with which physicians are confronted, this book is easy to read. Each chapter has a short introduction and an equally brief chapter summary. The text is useful for those who are overwhelmed by computer jargon and need a simple introduction to personal computers. For those interested in purchasing computers for personal use, the hardware descriptions provide basic guidance. The author's hardware recommendations are based on balancing system function with acceptable cost. Most readers would correctly conclude from the text that a 286 computer system with an EGA monitor and a 9-pin dot matrix printer would be reasonable for usual personal computer needs. Readers would also con-

clude that if some professional use of the system was anticipated, they would need at least a 24-pin printer and perhaps a 386SX or 386 system.

For software, the author reviews features found in each of the major types of software and then provides specific recommendations. For example, after discussing the features of word-processing programs in general (eg, editing, line justification, outlining, spell checking), four higher-priced and four lower-priced products are listed, along with the author's opinion of the best product available in each category. Features of individual programs and comparisons of products are not presented, however. Discussion of the medically important software areas of database, communications, and utility programs is cursory.

Using this book as an introduction, a computerphobe could learn enough to ensure self-preservation in today's increasingly computerized society. Although the book provides reasonable guidance, much additional research would be needed before purchasing a true "business system."

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

The Crisis in Health Care: Ethical Issues. Nancy F. McKenzie (ed). Penguin USA, 1990, 640 pp, \$12.95 (paper).

The Crisis in Health Care: Ethical Issues registers the despair of many in our profession and in society regarding the faults and defects in the health care system. Family Medicine has served as an agent of change in trying to solve many of these problems. We are all disturbed by the inequities in health insurance for our

citizens, problems created by HMOs and the corporatization of medical care, the needs of providing health care for low income children, and what seems like burdensome and futile care for the hopelessly ill. McKenzie notes that our primary care system is disintegrating and that society will debate about universal health insurance during the next 20 years. She foresees that the AIDS epidemic will break the back of our inadequate health care system.

There is a cacophony of voices in this anthology, and the socially conscious family physician will find many articles of interest. The foreword by Dr Dawn McGuire, a resident in neurology, best speaks to the despair and dysfunction in our present system. The book contains some articles dated 1970 and 1971 that do not ring true to our current circumstances. Some articles are too diffuse and too theoretical, with a predominance of the essays written by nonphysicians. My greatest reservation about this book is that it combines an accurate and caustic criticism of our health care delivery system (mainly based on ethical issues of justice) with a random selection of articles on ethical subjects that either are not examined comprehensively or represent only one point of view. We can all agree to the call to arms that homelessness in the United States is an inexcusable disgrace and must be eliminated; but many ethical subjects are presented in an isolated form with no counterbalancing argument. Examples of ethics topics that are not fully explored include when it is appropriate to break the medical confidentiality of AIDS patients, and what the appropriate treatment of malformed children should be. Furthermore, there is no commentary provided by

the editor to make the disparate essays into one fabric.

In conclusion this book could not be used as an ethics text because of its lack of introductory ethical principles and its highly selective choice of articles that do not always harmonize with the chief theme of the book, the crisis in health care.

William Reichel, MD
Boston, Massachusetts

AIDS and Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Manuel Schydlower, Mary-Ann Shafer (eds). Hanley and Belfus, Philadelphia, 1990, 240 pp, \$28.00. ISBN 1-56053-028-6.

The appropriate recognition and treatment of sexually transmitted infections is particularly important to family physicians. *AIDS and Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases* provides the basic and clinically relevant facts about STDs. The text is not an in-depth review of each disease, but is current, practical, and useful. The very adequate references that are included facilitate further research by the curious clinician.

The chapters, written by prominent scholars, include the topics of AIDS, human papilloma virus, herpes simplex virus, gonorrhea, syphilis, *Chlamydia trachomatis*, pelvic inflammatory disease, urethritis, cervicitis, and vaginitis. Chapters on STD epidemiology, prevention, and history, and on STDs in homosexuals are also included. An excellent chapter about office laboratory testing for STDs is advantageous to all physicians.

The text is not entirely comprehensive, as the less common infections of chancroid, granuloma inguinale, and lymphogranuloma venereum are not addressed. Similarly, STD-associated topics of hepatitis, cytomegalovirus, and parasitic diseases are absent. The limited black-and-white photography is generally

of poor quality, and many pictures do not readily portray the intended visual findings. There appears to be a deficiency of beneficial algorithms for the busy clinician.

Overall, the book serves as a good basic reference on sexually transmitted diseases. The text expands and complements the pragmatic workbook approach of the CDC's 1989 *Sexually Transmitted Diseases Treatment Guidelines*. The information provided will contribute to most physicians' STD knowledge base and enable clinicians to better manage these potentially difficult infections and the emotional repercussions experienced by patients.

Daron G. Ferris
Augusta, Georgia

Textbook of Family Practice (4th Edition). Robert E. Rakel (ed). WB Saunders, Philadelphia, 1990, 1950 pp, \$125.00. ISBN 0-7216-3115-0.

The fourth edition of Rakel's *Textbook of Family Practice* achieves admirably its stated goals "to help physicians in family practice develop new skills and remain current in their specialty" and "to provide a reliable source of the knowledge essential to effective practice." It will prove useful both as a concise clinical reference for the busy practitioner and as a comprehensive treatment of family practice for students.

Thirty-three of the book's 83 chapters are new, and 19 have been completely rewritten by new authors since the 1984 edition. The 44 chapters of Part IV, Practice of Family Medicine, constitute the clinical core and can be traced to the book's origins. The predecessor to edition I in 1973 was the popular text, *Specialties in General Practice*, edited by R.L. Cecil and H.F. Conn. Contributors to it were experts in medicine's various disciplines and they wrote under specialty chapter titles. The contrast

between that pattern and the 1990 *Textbook of Family Practice* reflects the evolution of our specialty itself. While specialty surveys are still included, most of the chapter titles are now clinical problems rather than specialty labels, and family physicians are usually the authors or coauthors. Rather than knowledge derived exclusively from experience in other fields we also find information from observation and investigation that took place in family practice settings. These chapters are excellent for reviewing current knowledge and practice when clinical problems are encountered in daily patient care. Particularly valuable are the many tables summarizing diagnostic issues, medications, and treatment decisions. A highlight for me is Ian McWhinney's chapter, "Clinical Problem-Solving in Family Practice."

This clinical core of the text is surrounded by five major sections that elucidate the state of the art and science of family medicine and its practice: "Principles of Family Practice," "Community Medicine," "Communication with Patients," and "Practice Management and Research." Of particular value among the six appendices are tables of laboratory values and the recommendations of the US Preventive Services Task Force.

All this adds up to a completely readable, and very useful textbook. The cost of \$125 contrasts markedly with the \$29.50 price sticker still in my copy of the 1973 edition but is what one would expect for a major text of this size and, in addition to inflation, reflects the doubling of the contents of the text since 1973.

Theodore J. Phillips, MD
Lopez Island, Washington

A Clinical Guide for the Care of Older Women. Richard L. Byyny, Leon Speroff. Williams & Wilkins, Balti-

more, 1990, 318 pp, \$49.95 (hard-cover).

A few months ago, some of the geriatricians in our department were wishing aloud for a geriatric reference book in the style of Speroff's *Clinical Gynecologic Endocrinology and Infertility*; in other words a practical approach to common diagnostic and treatment problems of the elderly, with concise rationales, good graphic design, and lots of flow charts. Much to my delight, I received Byyny and Speroff's new book a few days later.

It has the desired attractive, easy-to-peruse format, simplified tables and figures, and excellent flow charts for diagnosing common problems (such as breast lumps and incontinence). The authors orient their approach toward preventive care. The book does, indeed, include practical information, from a gratuitous recipe for "Super Oat Bran Muffins" to an invaluable guide to the use of pessaries. As the authors intended, this book will be a good reference for clinicians in day-to-day practice.

An unusual feature of the book is that its scope begins with menopause (rather earlier in age than most geriatric texts), and concentrates on the subsequent two decades of life, with less emphasis on the care of the very old. Since both of the authors

are endocrinologists, topics such as thyroid disease, obesity, and gynecology are treated in detail and with utmost authority. I found the sections on breast cancer, incontinence, hormone replacement therapy, and vulvar lesions particularly helpful. On the other hand, constipation rates a scant paragraph; gastrointestinal, pulmonary, neurologic, and cardiologic disorders are covered superficially. Hormone replacement therapy finds its way into practically every chapter; the authors' positive bias toward it must be taken into account. Finally, I commend the authors for including suggestions on preventive care and on ways to bring about behavioral change, but some readers will be uncomfortable with the tone of grandiosity used by the authors in referring to these recommendations as "the secrets of life." The screening recommendations are chosen arbitrarily and do not extend past age 70 years.

In summary, this book has already been useful to me in teaching and clinical practice, but I would welcome a future edition that has expanded authorship and more authoritative treatment of nonendocrine, nongynecologic topics.

*Louise Acheson, MD, MS
Case Western Reserve University*

From Kramer Laboratories

Fungi Nail®

The safe, simple, effective remedy for the pain and embarrassment of nail fungus.

Fungi-Nail is today's most popular topical medication for fungus infection of the nail and paronychia. It helps alleviate the pain and acts to eliminate the actual fungus. It fights thick, split, discolored nails caused by nail fungus. It helps prevent fungus on the nails of women who use artificial nails.

Fungi-Nail uses two recognized anti-fungal agents, resorcinol and parachlorometaxenal, to fight infection at the fingernail or toenail site and surrounding tissue. Another key ingredient, benzocaine, acts to provide relief from accompanying pain and discomfort.

Fungi-Nail comes in a one-ounce bottle with sufficient solution for up to six months of usage. The built-in applicator makes treatment as simple as applying nail polish.

Available at local pharmacies everywhere.

SEND FOR FREE SAMPLES
Literature and samples are available. Complete and mail this coupon today.

Kramer Laboratories
8778 S.W. 8th St.
Miami, FL 33174

Please send literature and samples of Fungi-Nail, your topical formulation for the treatment of fungus infection of the nail and paronychia.

Physician Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

For Faster Action Call

1-800-824-4894

