

book review

Skin Disease: Diagnosis and Treatment

By Thomas P. Habif, MD; James L. Campbell, Jr, MD, MS; Mark J. Quitadamo, MD; and Kathryn A. Zug, MD
©2001, Mosby, Inc., St. Louis, Missouri. 557 pages

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A Review by Yelva L. Lynfield, MD

This beautiful, brand-new paperback book was designed as a field guide for primary physicians. I also recommend it to medical students, medical specialists, and dermatologists. Owning it and benefiting from Dr. Habif's long clinical experience is like having a consultant-in-residence. I keep it in our dermatology clinic to show patients pictures of their diseases; when they recognize lesions similar to theirs, they are happily convinced of their diagnoses. (And so are the residents!)

The organization of this book is excellent. An alphabetical index of disorders, from "Acanthosis nigricans" to "Warts, plantar," covers the inside covers. The table of contents lists chapters such as Topical Therapy, Benign Skin Tumors, and Cutaneous Manifestations of Internal Disease. A comprehensive alphabetical index at the end starts with "A-200 for lice," includes "Foot, Athlete's," and ends with "Zyrtec, see Cetirizine."

More than 250 common diseases and their treatments are described in a concise 2-page format with bulleted text and distribution diagrams on the left and color photographs on the opposite pages. Additional color photographs follow. Appendices cover primary, secondary, and special lesions (the classical approach to learning dermatology); differential diagnosis by body region; quantity of cream to apply and dispense; corticosteroids (topical and oral, with brand and generic names, potencies,

and tube sizes); and dermatology formulary (arranged according to indication, again with brand and generic names and packaging).

The superb color photographs (more than 500) include all the common dermatologic diseases; however, you will have to look elsewhere for the rarities. You also will have to look elsewhere for journal references; these are easy to find in a medical library or by doing a literature search on the Internet.

Examples of practical information in the book are where to order gluten-free foods (for dermatitis herpetiformis), step-by-step details of doing a KOH examination (a drop of Parker's blue ink may be helpful), and a technique for removing a tick (with an instrument called *Ticked Off*).

Most of the book is of lasting value, but some will need updating in a new edition in a few years. The only physician I would advise against buying this book is one who already owns Habif's hardcover book, *Clinical Dermatology: A Color Guide to Diagnosis and Therapy*, published in 1996, which contains the same pictures; instead, I would advise him or her to buy the paperback, *Color Atlas and Synopsis of Clinical Dermatology: Common and Serious Diseases*, by Thomas B. Fitzpatrick, MD, et al. If you already own Fitzpatrick's book, get Habif's also; it is a bargain.

To order this book, please contact Mosby, Inc., by telephone at 314-453-7010 or 800-545-2522 or visit the Web site at <http://www.harcourthealth.com/mosby>.

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