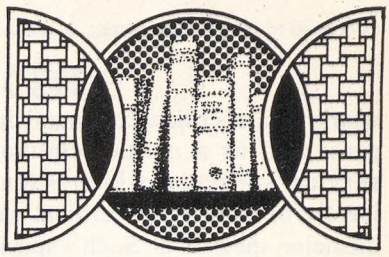
Book Reviews



The Critically Ill Child: Diagnosis and Management (2nd Edition). *Clement A. Smith, W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1977, 363 pp., $13.50.*

This is the second edition of a book whose thrust is therapy rather than diagnosis. The book originates from a series of individual articles dealing with the critically ill child which appeared in *Pediatrics,* the publication of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Each one of 25 chapters deals with a separate disease entity and approaches it from the standpoint of management in an acute hospital setting, most often the intensive care unit. Because of this, most family physicians would find the information inappropriate to their care of ill children, which usually takes place in an ambulatory setting. As an exception, several chapters do discuss relevant problems including Emergency Room treatment of shock and trauma, status epilepticus, respiratory arrest, and anaphylaxis. The last chapter, dealing with psychiatric emergencies is worth reading because of its relevance to primary care. Its inclusion at the end is perhaps the best indication that this book is intended for other than the generalist.

In spite of the many authors involved, this book is pleasantly readable. The photographs are few and except for those included in the chapter on respiratory arrest, contribute little.

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Critical Care Medicine: Current Principles and Practices. *Max Harry Weil and Herbert Shubin. Harper & Row, Inc., Hagerstown, Maryland, 1976, 192 pp., $12.95.*

This book represents a concise compilation of 21 contributions originally published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* between 1968 and 1972, somewhat updated. The book is designed as a brief outline review of the

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whole area of critical care medicine, presented as a multidisciplinary service specialty which should ideally be directed by critical care medicine specialists. Such a specialist directs the operations of critical care units which are organized in large hospitals either by organ systems, by clinical syndromes, or for specific patient populations.

The content is organized into 21 brief (four-to-six-page) chapters, well-indexed for quick reference, with a major syndrome covered in outline form. The few tables and illustrations which are included appear to be accurate and useful, although not extensive or exhaustive.

While the book cannot serve alone as a complete guidebook to critical care, it can be informative for any physician who is interested in the development of critical care medicine as a service specialty, or who is responsible for the development of a critical care unit in his own hospital. For the family physician it might serve as a quick checklist to assess the thoroughness of his initial assessment of the patient and his plan for immediate care.

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Clinical Interviewing Skills (3rd Edition). *Robert E. Froelich and F. Marian Bishop. C.V. Mosby Company, Saint Louis, 1977, 203 pp., $7.50.*

The third edition of this book provides a welcome addition to the literature on one of the basic skills which relates to family medicine. No matter how good a clinician may be, the ability to intervene effectively in any particular patient's illness, or in a family situation, will depend almost entirely upon the physician's ability to utilize interviewing skills. Upon this will depend not only his/her effectiveness in eliciting relevant information, but also his ability to impart information about treatment and prognosis, and even his ability to use the interview itself as a therapeutic tool. All the topics are well and ably introduced in this comparatively short and readable book. However, as is not infrequently the case, the subtitle of the book causes more trouble than its general intent. In this case, the subtitle is "A Programmed Manual for Data Gathering, Evaluation, and Patient Management." While the book is interspersed with questions and answers, in no way can this be described as a programmed learning manual. This reviewer does not see how in fact it could be effectively amended to become a programmed manual in this particular subject. The questions and answers provide very good illustrations, brighten the text, and make the book much more readable. It is impossible however to treat it as a programmed learning experience, since the text is determined by whatever response the student has made to a given question. It seems a great pity that the authors, who obviously are very skilled in interviewing techniques, seem not to be more familiar in this particular instance with educational terminology and techniques, which had led them to describe inaccurately their otherwise very valuable book.

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