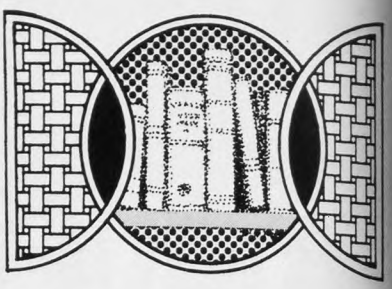
Book Reviews



The Year Book of Drug Therapy—1979. *Leo E. Hollister (ed). Year Book Medical Publishers, Chicago, 1979, 437 pp., $27.50.*

A short description of the manner in which *The Year Book* is prepared tells us that the editors select and abstract articles. The editors say that they like to think *The Year Book* is read, primarily because their readers want to make the most effective use of drugs for treating their patients.

A special article in the 1979 *Year Book* deals with some of the hazards of social drugs. The other sections are labeled General Information, Drug Actions, Adverse Drug Effects, Allergic Disorders, Blood Diseases, Cardiovascular Diseases, Endocrine and Metabolic Disorders, Eye, Ear, and Facial Nerve Disorders, Gastrointestinal Diseases, Genitourinary Tract Disorders, Infectious Diseases, Neoplastic Diseases, Neurological Disease, Psychiatric Diseases, Obstetric and Gynecologic Disorders, Respiratory Tract Disorders, Rheumatic and Arthritic Diseases, Skin Diseases, and Surgery. A current literature quiz and answers to it are appended.

It should be emphasized that this is not a drug formulary or pharmacology textbook. I looked for information concerning questions I had about certain drugs and did not find it. Apparently no articles containing answers to those questions had been abstracted by the editors. The abstractions appear to be well done. They are concise and most of them are followed by a short discussion by an editor. There are a good number of tables and graphs and 60 figures, with very few actual pictures. The typography is excellent.

This book would be most useful to the clinician, such as the family physician or internist, who wants to know what was published about drugs last year. It is not comprehensive enough for the student.

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Diagnosis of Acute Abdominal Disease. *John M. Beal, John G. Raffensperger. Lea and Febiger, Philadelphia, 1979, 169 pp., $9.00 (paper).*

With many demands for a physician's time, care must be taken to select books which are concise, relevant, and easy to read. *Diagnosis of Acute Abdominal Disease* meets these criteria. This highly readable guide achieves its goal of stressing history taking and physical examination in arriving at a correct and early decision.

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The initial three chapters deal with the pathophysiology and anatomy of abdominal pain, history taking, and physical examination. Although short, the chapters on the history and examination cover these topics extremely well. The next three chapters deal with etiological mechanisms in abdominal pain: inflammation (appendicitis, diverticulitis, pancreatitis), obstruction (small intestine, large intestine, cholecystitis, renal colic), and perforations.

Chapter Seven concerns abdominal emergencies in the infant. The last four sections deal with vascular diseases (aneurysms, arterial occlusion), gynecological emergencies, trauma, and miscellaneous etiologies.

Throughout the book, the authors stress basic principles in the interpretation of history and clinical findings in a clear and understandable manner. There are several tables helpful in differential diagnosis, and a number of drawings and x-ray films of pathological findings. Interspersed throughout the book are a number of italicized "maxims" which emphasize many useful pearls. Each chapter has recent references with brief abstracts of the more relevant ones. Of course, a complete index follows the last chapter.

The strong points of this book are its readability, its logical approach, and its emphasis on the most common abdominal diseases. Although it is a small book, easily carried in your coat pocket, it contains a great deal of information and is by no means an oversimplification. It should be extremely useful to medical students and resi-

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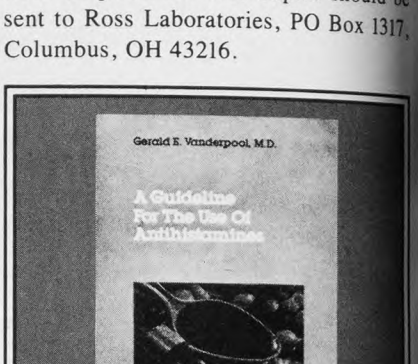
A Special Service From Ross Laboratories

Ross Laboratories is pleased to make available the booklet, *A Guideline for the Use of Antihistamines*, by Gerald E. Vanderpool, MD. This is an excellent guide to antihistamines and their clinical application. Requests for free copies should be sent to Ross Laboratories, PO Box 1317, Columbus, OH 43216.



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dents in learning an approach to abdominal problems, and equally useful to the practicing family physician who deals with acute abdominal disease and "acute" decision making.

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Drug Interactions: Clinical Significance of Drug-Drug Interactions and Drug Effects on Clinical Laboratory Results (4th Edition). *Philip D. Hansten. Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, 1979, 552 pp., $16.00 (paper).*

Drug therapy plays a significant role in the family physician's ability to control the course or the clinical manifestations of disease. Studies report that physicians in the primary care specialties are the most frequent prescribers of drugs. Estimates of the number of prescriptions written per patient visit approach one per visit. Certainly it is not unusual that a given patient will be taking more than one drug concomitantly. In many instances, drug therapy, intended to restore or maintain health, results in additional patient illness. The author notes that such iatrogenic disease can be recognized in the form of an adverse drug reaction or an adverse drug-drug interaction. Adverse drug reactions are often unpredictable and not preventable, being considered necessary consequences of the treatment plan. In contrast, drug-drug interactions are usually predictable and are almost always preventable. Dr. Hansten goes on to note that predicting and preventing these drug-drug interactions cannot be accomplished by a person with a superficial knowledge of their mechanisms or a skeptical view of their significance.

Hansten's *Drug Interactions,* now in its fourth edition, remains the most comprehensive source of information on drug-drug interactions and drug effects on clinical laboratory test results available to the family physician. The information is presented clearly and concisely, utilizing a unique type-coded indexing system for determining clinical significance. Interactions presented in bold type are well documented both in quantity of documentation and potential for harming the patient and are considered of major clinical significance. Interactions appearing in italics are of moderate clinical significance. Roman type indicates minor clinical significance, including interactions requiring further documentation, those having a low order of potential harm, and those with a low order of occurrence. In contrast to other such references, Hansten offers the clinician useful information on how to manage each reported interaction. All interactions are extensively referenced and pertain to studies in man unless specifically stated otherwise.

The fourth edition has been expanded to include 200 additional drug-drug and drug-food interactions, while 70 previously reported drug-drug interactions have undergone extensive revision. The section on drug effects on clinical laboratory test results has been revised and additional chapters on serum gamma glutamyl transpeptidase, serum prolactin, and serum growth hormone are included. Eight algorithms have been added to assist the clinician in resolving specific problems related to drug-drug interactions. Additionally, this edition includes a table of the effects of hepatotoxic drugs on liver function tests.

With the fourth edition, Hansten has made an already indispensible book even more valuable. This reference is highly recommended for inclusion in the office library of all physicians.

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Interviewing and Patient Care (2nd Edition). *Allen J. Enelow, Scott N. Swisher. Oxford University Press, New York, 1979, 255 pp., $12.95 (cloth), $5.95 (paper).*

This is a well-written book, both readable and well organized. Since family physicians in many medical schools are teaching interviewing skills, it is particularly recommended for this purpose and for teaching approach to the patient in general. Certain parts of the book would also be relevant for use in teaching or re-teaching interviewing skills to family practice residents early in their training. The chapter on basic interviewing is an excellent review of fundamental skills in this area.

The chapter on interviewing children and parents is particularly pertinent and addresses itself in a clear way to problems involved in interviewing children. The chapter on interviewing the family is good, although it is hoped that these are concepts with which family prac-

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tice residents are already familiar. The chapter on emotional behavioral responses to illness and to the interview is very good and might be especially helpful for those residents involved in Balint-type seminars.

Overall, this is the best book on interviewing that I have seen.

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Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration. *Norman Cousins. WW Norton, New York, 1979, 173 pp., $9.95.*

This highly readable book grew out of an article written for *The New England Journal of Medicine* in 1964. Receiving over 3,000 letters from physicians after its publication, Norman Cousins (for over 30 years the editor of the prestigious *Saturday Review* and now its editorial chairman), began collecting material for a longer work—hence this book, 15 years later.

He wrote the original article after suffering a debilitating "collagen disease of unknown origin." Since he was advised that the chances against recovery were 500 to 1, Mr. Cousins, with the help of his personal physician, decided to try some unusual therapies.

Believing that the major part of his illness was caused by air pollution, excessive work, and mental stress, he decided to try to learn how to allow the body to heal itself.

His treatment included large doses (25 gm a day) of Vitamin C intravenously, termination of all medication (which included aspirin, butazolidine, codeine, and sedatives), and a program of "laugh therapy." The latter was undertaken, in part, through nightly screenings of old Marx Brothers movies, and the reading of such humorists as James Thurber, Ogden Nash, and E.B. White. ("Laughing," Cousins says, "is like jogging internally, without having to go outdoors.")

As a patient actively involved in his own care, Cousins requested that sedimentation rates be taken after these "laugh therapy" sessions; interestingly enough, each such episode uniformly resulted in a drop of the sedimentation rate of at least 5 mm.

The second half of his book may be of particular interest to family physicians, as Cousins makes a strong case for the "laying on of hands rather than tools." He says that if "trust does not become an important part of the physician-patient relationship, it is unlikely that healing will occur."

This is a remarkable and thoughtful book by a highly intelligent and well-informed layman who has long been friendly to medicine. He explores the interactions of the physician-patient relationship, the placebo affect, the will to live, and some of today's problems in medicine based on a careful review of the medical literature (about 200 references are included in the book). He makes an articulate plea for physicians and patients to work together in a partnership effort, with patients taking a more active and dignified role in their own care.

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