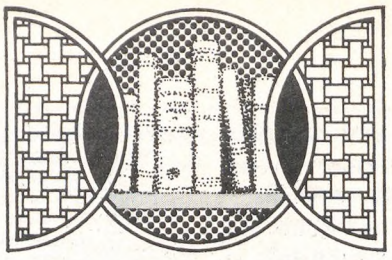
# Book Reviews



**The Practical Management of the Developmentally Disabled Child.** *Albert P. Scheiner, Israel F. Abroms (eds). CV Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1980, 461 pp., $37.50.*

The stated purpose of this text is to provide primary care physicians and allied health care providers with a guide to the practical skills necessary to screen, diagnose, evaluate, and treat developmentally disabled children. To that end, the editors have compiled a multiauthored text addressing such general topics as mental retardation, cerebral palsy, and myelodysplasia, as well as the more specific problem areas of hearing and vision deficits, seizures, learning disability, and speech and language problems. In addition, there are specific chapters devoted to "the role of the primary physician," "neurodevelopmental assessment," "behavioral aspects. . . ," and "practical problems and their management."

The choice of topics in terms of relevance and comprehensive coverage of the field is quite good. The strong points are the detailed charts, lists, and tabulations of normal developmental processes and milestones in the various areas that serve as reference points for identifying specific delays and deviations. These same features, on the other hand, impart a formal quality that detracts from overall readability. While striving to address the total care picture, most chapters are more heavily weighted in favor of diagnosis and assessment as opposed to management. This may be an inherent problem related to this field of medicine, but the final chapter attempts to deal specifically with this question by addressing the "practical problems" of the child, the family, and the primary care physician by providing actual suggestions for dealing with the day-to-day aspects of chronic illness.

This text will be most useful as a reference source for identifying the child at risk for various types of developmental disability. In addition, the philosophy of the various authors, as expressed in their attitude to these problems, will better enable the primary care physician to become more involved in this challenging aspect of his practice.

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**Management of Endocrine Disorders.** *Jerome M. Hershman (ed). Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, 1980, 259 pp., $13.50 (paper), $16.25 (Canada).*

This short paperback is a direct, no-nonsense guide to common and uncommon endocrine problems encountered in primary care. In addition to the usual chapters on pituitary, adrenal, and gonadal pathology, there are sharply focused descriptions of obesity, hyperlipidemia, calcium, bone, and water metabolism. The majority of the chapters are written clearly enough for the resident on his first endocrine rotation but with sufficient detail for the experienced clinician in the pri-

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mary care fields. The difficult concepts are clearly diagramed by flow charts and other black-on-white illustrations.

My only criticism of the book is a problem that is common to edited volumes—some chapters are much more readable than others. Since basic endocrine physiology is kept to a bare minimum, some of the more complex chapters (eg, those on pituitary or adrenal diseases) demand more background knowledge from the reader; fortunately, these deal with infrequent problems in primary care. The discussions on common problems, such as thyroid diseases or female reproduction pathology, are exceptionally clear and useful.

On the whole, this book appeals to the clinician. Its reasonable price combined with clear, concise handling of a potentially confusing subspecialty yields a considerable amount of information per dollar invested.

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**Common Skin Disorders: A Manual for Physicians and Patients.** *Ernest Epstein. Medical Economics Books, Oradell, New Jersey, 1979, 272 pp., $16.50 (paper).*

*Common Skin Disorders* is a softcover dermatology manual written for the generalist physician who needs practical, everyday information about common skin problems. It is not a textbook that discusses detailed etiologies or vast arrays of treatment regimens. Instead, the author focuses on some 30 common skin conditions and offers "some specific, detailed treatment directions," the choices reflecting his own experience and biases.

A unique feature of the manual is the collection of patient information sheets found in the back of the book. These are meant to be copied and distributed to patients to provide them with a better understanding of their skin problems and the recommended treatment. Several introductory pages are devoted to a discussion of the use of the information sheets and reasons why physicians and patients will like them. The information sheets are written in lay terminology and would probably be useful to many physicians and their patients. Instructions on how to write patient information sheets are provided so that a physician so desiring could begin to use them for a variety of purposes.

The author's style is clear and very readable. The material is well organized and clearly presented. The information provided is basic, practical, and useful. Chapters are short, averaging about five pages each. The longest chapter (14 pages) discusses rational use of topical steroids, and is one of the most informative discussions of this topic that I have read. Other topics included are acne, atopic dermatitis, hand dermatitis, pruritus ani, and many other common problems. There are only two photographs and no diagrams. This does not necessarily detract from the book, as it is not intended to be an all-inclusive text.

Family physicians, residents, and students would find this book useful for the purpose for which it was intended. I would recommend it to anyone who needs a good resource for practical therapy of common skin problems.

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