

**Emergency Procedures and Techniques (2nd Edition).** Robert R. Simon, Barry E. Brenner. Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, 1987, 432 pp., \$29.95.

This outstanding paperback textbook is in its second edition because of its relevance of content to family practice. It is particularly helpful to the family physician working in the emergency room or as a primary responder to any medical or surgical emergency.

It is extremely readable and well organized. Interspaced between outstanding illustrations are highlighted cautions and axioms that are important clinical points for the family physician who is performing these procedures. The indications, contraindications, and techniques necessary for performing the procedures are clearly delineated. The authors very nicely mix this format with a multitude of diagrams and illustrations.

Certainly this book was published for not only the emergency room physician, but also for the family physician dealing with trauma in a small community. Its paperback form places it in an inexpensive category, and it would be well suited for the family physician practicing in a rural setting.

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**Textbook of Diagnostic Medicine.** A. H. Samiy (ed), R. Gordon Douglas, Jr., Jeremiah A. Barondess (eds). Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, 1987, 900 pp., \$69.50. ISBN 0-8121-1006-4.

In a world of proliferating medical imaging and laboratory technologies, it is a breath of fresh air to have a book that reexamines the place of patient historical and physical examination data in the clinical problem-solving process. This encyclopedic, well-organized, and highly readable text succeeds in this important task.

The editors have done a masterful job in pulling together the contribu-

tions of 35 academically based medical subspecialists. Two excellent introductory chapters provide an overview of (1) the principles of clinical diagnosis, and (2) the selection and interpretation of laboratory tests and diagnostic procedures. In the following 20 chapters, more than 500 patient complaints or problems affecting different organ systems are discussed in terms of their definition, pathophysiology, clinical presentation, differential diagnosis, and diagnostic evaluation and workup. The writing is clear, succinct, and practically oriented. Frequent use is made of tables to summarize the key points, and a helpful appendix includes reference values for common laboratory tests in both conventional and SI units. I was quickly able to access needed clinical diagnostic information by using the book's comprehensive index.

As might be expected in any multi-authored text that tries to cover the waterfront, there are a number of limitations. The coverage of topics is at times uneven (eg, 202 pages are dedicated to endocrine and metabolic problems and only 17 pages to constitutional and nonspecific problems). Significant overlapping of content occurs in a number of chapters. More liberal use of illustrations and other visual graphics would have greatly assisted the reader in understanding discussions of anatomy and pathophysiology.

Finally, this reviewer would have liked to see more discussion about (1) the epidemiology of different medical problems, especially by patient age and clinical setting; (2) psychosocial and family contributions to patients' presenting problems; (3) the relative sensitivity, specificity, and predictive values of symptoms, signs, and tests for particular diseases; (4) estimated costs of various laboratory tests and diagnostic workups; and (5) available computer software for medical diagnosis.

Despite these deficiencies, I believe that this text would be a valuable addition to the reference library of busy practicing family physicians and

should be carefully studied by family practice residents and medical students interested in improving their differential diagnostic abilities. By taking a patient- rather than disease-oriented approach to diagnosis, the authors have come closer to capturing the reality of everyday clinical practice than have many other standard textbooks of medicine.

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**Procedures in Ambulatory Care.** Robert D. Gillette. McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1987, 245 pp., \$16.95 (paper). ISBN 0-07-023265-2.

*Procedures in Ambulatory Care* is an interesting book that reviews a variety of procedures and activities included in family medicine. It is divided into a somewhat confusing mixture of specific procedures based on anatomic location and is then subdivided by categories of procedures such as spirometry, electrocardiography, and others.

The content is certainly relevant to family practice and includes things that all of us do on a daily basis. It is fairly readable and a somewhat useful book, although rather superficial in its treatment and at times not containing the most important and least likely known items of information necessary to performing the procedure. The illustrations are well done, although not so many as would be expected for a procedural book.

The audience best served would be medical students and allied health professionals. Most residents and practicing family physicians and academic faculty are likely to be already well versed in the contents. The book could be appropriate for a medical school library as well as a library within a residency training program.

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