

ment syndrome. Given the comprehensive nature of this reference, it is not surprising that there is substantial emphasis throughout the book on the care of major pediatric trauma from high-impact injuries.

Throughout the text there is a clarity and consistency to the writing that allows the content to be easily understood by the non-orthopedist. Major teaching points are thoroughly explained and are frequently emphasized within each chapter. There are copious illustrations and x-ray films that appropriately supplement the written information. Another pleasing feature is that these visual aids have been skillfully placed so that excessive page turning is avoided. The only negative finding is that occasionally it was difficult to find basic treatment guidelines that might be critical for a primary care physician. For example, information on the proper immobilization time for a nondisplaced distal radial fracture in a child was not readily apparent. Although this information might be obvious to the practicing orthopedist, for a family physician such information would be vital in providing comprehensive office management for this uncomplicated problem.

The classic reference text on pediatric fractures has been *Fractures in Children* (JB Lippincott, Philadelphia, Pa) edited by Rockwood et al, with a third edition published in 1991. This new work compares quite favorably with the gold standard. The chapters are of equal clarity and both texts have ample x-ray illustrations to support the teaching. This book can certainly be regarded as equally authoritative with the publication of Rockwood et al.

In spite of an orientation to a specialty area, *Management of Pediatric Fractures* is a worthwhile addition to a family practice reference library. It has significant potential to be useful for frontline family physicians, especially those

in a rural area without immediate orthopedic consultation or for those with a special interest in orthopedics.

Ted C. Schaffer, MD
St Margaret Memorial Hospital
Pittsburgh, Pa

Instructions For Patients

5th ed, by H. Winter Griffith, 598 pp, \$48.75, ISBN 0-7216-4930-0, Philadelphia, Pa, WB Saunders Co, 1994.

Organizing patient education in busy practices remains an unachieved ideal for most physicians. Having a readily available comprehensive collection of materials that requires a reasonable amount of storage space defies most offices. *Instructions to Patients* offers immediate practical assistance.

The book is well organized for effective use. Five hundred four subjects cover conditions that are commonly encountered in family medicine. Each subject is covered in a single page. Subjects are arranged alphabetically. The six-page index is helpful to physicians and nonphysicians alike. One can quickly learn whether to look under "otitis media" or "ear infection, middle." Each subject includes basic information on the condition, possible treatments, and a section titled "Notify Our Office If." Each page is designed to be copied for distribution to patients, and the book's preface even gives pointers on effective photocopying.

Understanding the language of the text requires at least a high school education and, for many patients, will demand review between patient and health care provider. The format invites such interaction and highlights a description of the condition, frequent signs and symptoms, causes, risk factors, prevention, expected outcome, and complications. Treatment includes general measures, medications used, and activity and diet recommendations.

The breadth of family medicine is included: acute and chronic conditions of all ages and both sexes, as well as health promotion and prevention. There are pages on general and special diets (for example, calcium enhanced, cholesterol and sodium restricted, and fiber enhanced), as well as appendixes that include exercises for specific anatomical areas, breast self-examination, fever control, the use of condoms, sexually transmitted diseases (specific diseases are covered under subject areas), and a series of anatomic charts. No subject could be covered exhaustively in one page, but acute ambulatory problems are covered thoroughly for routine use, and the sheets provide a concise summary for chronic or more complex conditions.

This fifth edition is substantially different from the fourth. It includes about 200 new topics. The content of each page has been revised and includes medications released in the past 2 years. The format of each page changed from predominantly a narrative to more of an outline format. This change makes it easier for medical personnel to review handout content with patients and enhances handouts as reinforcers of information and instruction. Most of the pages have space at the bottom for personal notes, and Dr Griffith even invited users to modify his text to their own needs.

Dr Griffith died during the revision of this edition. Having gone through five editions since 1968, this book has achieved revered status in many practices. This book reflects his thoughtful commitment to a patient-physician relationship based on informed, active partners. This is not a book for a physician who is looking for a set of tear-out sheets to hand patients as they leave the office. It enhances and encourages the best in practicing physicians as patient educators.

Alex Sherriffs, MD
University of California—
San Francisco