

Current Therapy in Internal Medicine

3rd ed, edited by Jerome P. Kassirer, 1824 pages, \$99, ISBN 1-55664-247-4, Philadelphia, Pa, BC Decker Inc, 1991.

This is the third edition in what has proven to be a successful series of clinical therapeutic texts. As with the preceding editions, this work is focused on therapeutics and serves as a useful and quick reference for the practicing physician dealing with common medical diagnoses. As stated in the preface of the book, some chapters describing treatments for specific disease entities were selected from previously published subspecialty books (namely, *Current Therapy in Cardiovascular Disease* and *Current Therapy in Nephrology and Hypertension*). Even these particular chapters have been updated with the latest information by the time of printing. The editor, Dr Kassirer, has gathered an impressive group of contributing authors who bring together their knowledge and collective experience in discussing a broad range of adult medicine topics.

The scope of the text is extensive enough that this reviewer was unable to read the book cover to cover. However, I reviewed a sampling of a variety of common and not so common clinical entities to assess the book's usefulness. As is true of any publication of its kind, this reference text is most helpful for those clinicians who have already formed a clinical impression or diagnosis and wish to investigate therapeutic options. There is little time and effort spent by the authors on pathogenesis associated with and di-

agnosis of these clinical entities. Such information is available in more comprehensive medical texts. An inherent weakness in any type of therapeutic text is that medical advances occur at such a rapid pace that some recommended therapies may be already rendered less useful by the time of printing. This particular edition appears to provide many useful recommendations to the practicing clinician.

This third edition is improved in several ways compared with the second edition under the same title. At the end of each chapter, there is a list of suggested readings on each topic. A significant section on acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and related clinical problems associated with the syndrome has been added. Another new topic is "Therapeutic Principles." Included in this section is a discussion of everything from therapeutic decision-making to health promotion and disease prevention to the ethical implications of therapeutic choices. This approach is consistent throughout the book; each chapter emphasizes prevention whenever relevant and a variety of nonpharmacologic, as well as pharmacologic therapeutic interventions. The approach is a practical one that employs the use of numerous treatment algorithms and a large number of tables listing common symptoms and commonly used medications for many conditions. One small drawback is that many of these tables are written in small print to accommodate the volume of material. All medications are listed only by the generic name, which may provide some frustration for a number of practicing clinicians.

On the whole, this hard-cover textbook takes a practical, common-

sense approach to medical therapeutics. Of particular value is the philosophical view that medical knowledge is constantly in flux and decisions made about an individual patient must always be made in the context of each particular situation. Some of the recommendations in the book are based on fact, while many others are the result of the author's studied opinions. Most chapters will describe a preferred approach and alternative therapies. In doing so, the authors recognize that there are frequently several ways to arrive at therapeutic success. As a result, this book offers practical advice that is directed to clinicians. I look forward to using it as a handy reference for the treatment of common medical problems. It is too large to fit in my coatpocket, but is smaller and easier to use than Harrison's *Principles of Internal Medicine*!

James F. Peggs, MD
Department of Family Practice
University of Michigan
Medical Center
Ann Arbor, Mich

Peripheral Vascular Diseases

by Jess R. Young, Robert A. Graor, Jeffrey W. Olin, and John R. Bartholomew, 790 pp, \$99, ISBN 0801661153, St Louis, Mo, Mosby-Year Book, 1991.

This is a clinically oriented reference textbook, which is, according to the authors, "intended for all physicians interested in caring for patients with vascular diseases." The authors also state that this text was written because the previous "bible" for this area had

not had a new edition since 1980. In general, the book lives up to its billing as a good reference text for diseases of the peripheral vascular system. It was written primarily by practicing clinicians and is heavily weighted away from theory and toward practical information about the diagnosis and treatment of peripheral vascular diseases. There are no family physicians listed as either editors or contributors.

The book is laid out logically, beginning with chapters on medical history, clinical clues to peripheral vascular disease, and the physical examination of the peripheral vascular system. Following a chapter on noninvasive vascular testing are basic science chapters that cover characteristics of many diseases involving the vascular system, including coagulation, hypertension, fibrinolysis, atherosclerosis, and lipid disorders. Subsequent chapters deal with anatomical areas of vascular diseases, including coronary artery disease, renal vascular disease, and vascular diseases of the upper extremities. Diseases of the venous system and lymphedema are also covered. The text is easily read and, in most cases, each chapter is supported by a good reference list.

Each chapter includes discussion about medical history and physical examinations, diagnostic considerations, discussion of the basic anatomy when appropriate, and present and possible future treatment options. The book is well illustrated, including photographs, roentgenograms, drawings, and histologic figures. It covers such practical areas as how to apply an Unna boot and how to measure intracompartmental pressure when considering the diagnosis of a compartment syndrome. The chapter on physical examination of the peripheral vascular system contains a number of excellent figures that demonstrate the thoracic outlet maneuver, the Allen test, and listening points for head and neck bruits.

The practicing family physi-

cian, resident, or medical student will find this book most valuable as a general reference text in peripheral vascular diseases. Weaknesses of this book are very few. Future editions could be improved with the inclusion of one or more family physicians as contributors and perhaps an expanded scope of the book to include more than just the technical aspects of diagnosis and management of peripheral vascular diseases. I highly recommend this book.

Paul M. Paulman, MD
University of Nebraska
Medical Center
Omaha

Bronchial Asthma: Mechanisms and Therapeutics

3rd ed, edited by Earle B. Weiss and Myron Stein, 1259 pp, with illus, \$210, ISBN 0-316-92899-2, Boston, Mass, Little Brown & Co, 1993.

The third edition of *Bronchial Asthma: Mechanisms and Therapeutics* is a lengthy and erudite dissertation of a complex disease. Each chapter was written by experts who have devoted many years to the study of asthma. The book follows a standard format. Chapters on pathophysiology, diagnostic methods, treatment of patients, and management of disease are both practical and up to date. The bibliography cites published literature from 1992. All of the chapters are easily cross-referenced, making it easier for the reader to fully understand basic sciences as they apply to issues of clinical care. While the book is easy to read it is particularly directed to pulmonologists, allergists, and physicians who are seriously interested in the complexity of asthma and want a major reference text to review. This book is not a text for reference in the midst of a busy office day when trying to decide which asthma medica-

tion to use, but it can easily be the book to take home to review specific chapters on issues in which more detailed knowledge is desired.

Over one third of the book is devoted to the complex issue of what the fundamental mechanism of asthma is. It is now recognized that penetration of inflammatory cells into tissue depends on their adhesion to vascular endothelial cells prior to migration to the site of inflammation. The chapter on leukocytes discusses adhesion molecules intercellular adhesion molecule 1, and endothelial leukocyte adhesion molecule 1, explaining their roles in inflammation. Intercellular adhesion molecule 1 is active in the recruitment and migration of neutrophils and eosinophils and may play a role in the migration of inflammatory cells to the airway epithelium. A discussion of how human bronchial and nasal epithelial cells can express intercellular adhesion molecule 1 is provided. Potential development of monoclonal antibodies to intercellular adhesion molecule 1 may decrease airway eosinophilia and hyperresponsiveness, a direct clinical application of a basic science theory.

A busy family physician with a strong interest in asthma would especially enjoy the second half of the book, which provides detailed discussions of management issues including inhaled corticosteroids and possible systemic adverse effects. There is an excellent discussion on the dosage of inhaled steroids required to cause growth retardation, bone loss, and posterior subcapsular cataracts. As detailed in this chapter, conventional doses of inhaled corticosteroids (0.4 to 0.6 mg/d) do not exert any discernible growth-inhibiting effect in asthmatic children followed up through adulthood. This information is very useful when dealing with the moderate-to-severe pediatric or adolescent asthmatic patient, as inhaled corticosteroids are the drug therapy of choice.

I found the chapter on childhood asthma to be insufficient, as there was