

## Book Reviews

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**The Handbook of Medical Treatment**, 17th ed, by H. David Watts, M.D., Greenbrae, CA: Jones Medical Publications, 1983, 478 pp, \$12.95.

The aim of this book is to provide an up-to-date compendium as a book of first reference for students, practicing physicians, and all health care professionals. This edition has been extensively revised. It is a soft-cover, pocket-sized book divided into 26 chapters. There are 28 authors, all but seven of whom are from the Medical School of the University of California, San Francisco. There is also an appendix giving details of methods of resuscitation, desirable weights (pre-1983 version), and normal values in both standard units and SI units. In view of the variation between laboratories for many tests, I am not sure how useful these normal values are.

There is a uniform format for each chapter with clear subject headings and a generally readable style. A didactic approach is used and few references are given, presumably because these would occupy too much space. Illustrations are few and confined to line drawings.

One of the best features of the book is the large number of tables that provide information in a rapidly assimilable and succinct form. Indeed, it might be possible to use this technique even more in future editions, for instance to illustrate the serologic findings in hepatitis B infection. Another very useful aspect of this volume is that recently introduced therapies such as calcium channel blockers, captopril, and hepatitis B vaccine are included. In fact, this small volume is packed with a lot of useful information of direct application in day-to-day patient management. Criticisms would include the lack of differentiation between different types of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, since the approach to therapy of asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, and bronchiectasis is different, particularly in the use of corticosteroids and cromolyn sodium. In addition, I think it would be helpful to have a section on the management of acute severe asthma and pneumothorax.

This book can be recommended as a useful, reasonably priced, first source of up-to-date information on treatment of a wide variety of general medical conditions. Many physicians in training find the inclusion

of references to journal articles, as is done by the Washington University School of Medicine *Manual of Medical Therapeutics* to be useful for further reference and this would be especially useful when dealing with newly introduced topics or areas of major recent advances.

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**Controversies in Coronary Artery Disease**, edited by Shahbudin H. Rahimtoola, M.D. Cardiovascular Clinics, Vol 13. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Co, 1983, 380 p, \$45.

This most recent addition to the Cardiovascular Clinics series is composed of 21 articles that review current thoughts on many of the potentially uncertain areas of modern cardiology. All selections are well written, are organized to cover the topics efficiently, and are supported by good, frequent tables and illustrations that are clearly and cleanly reproduced.

The opening article, on selection of an exercise test for diagnosis of coronary disease, not only gives a good review of the current techniques available, but also presents an excellent review of the recently revived concepts of disease prevalence, test predictive accuracy, and general Bayesian thought. As with any state-of-the-art review in rapid growth areas, the data may be out of date by the time of printing, as in the articles on streptokinase treatment of acute infarction and percutaneous angioplasty. In all of the articles, however, the basic concepts are sound and can serve as a framework on which to place new information as it becomes available.

Taken individually, the authors discuss a wide range of subjects, which probably will not hold equal interest. Taken together, however, they nicely cover many evolving areas of diagnosis, pathophysiology, and acute and chronic cardiac therapy.

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