

## Book Reviews

**2009 Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment.** Edited by Stephen J. McPhee and Maxine A. Papadakis. New York: McGraw Hill Lange; 2009. 1708 pp. US \$43.25 Paperback. ISBN: 978-0071591249.

*2009 Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment* is an excellent resource tool for inpatient and outpatient medicine. The annual review by medical specialists and reprint of *Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment* ensures that the clinical findings and treatment information, as well as the provided references, are comprehensive and up to date. New additions to this edition include a chapter on disorders of hemostasis and antithrombotic therapy, a reworked end-of-life chapter, and additional information in the chapter on alternative medicine and complementary therapies. This edition also benefits from an update on drug therapies, including HIV treatment and other antibiotic, antiviral, and antifungal agents.

Although each chapter is written by different specialists, the editors ensure that the same format and flow is maintained throughout the entire book. When appropriate, charts and graphs add to the text and aid in understanding and comparisons. For example, the chapter on systemic hypertension uses a number of tables and flow charts to provide a plethora of information about treatment algorithms and drugs, including dosage, cost, and adverse effects. The 16-page color insert provides photos of some common and uncommon presentations of diseases that relate back to the chapter text.

More than 40 chapters, useful charts and tables, and readable text make this book ideal for readers with a variety of backgrounds, including non-specialists.

This text is a great resource for families and patients who want to discover more about diseases or treatments and facilitate their ability to ask questions and make them feel more comfortable talking about disease. Nonmedical readers should feel confident in the information provided, as opposed to what might be available online, since this text is reviewed yearly and written by experts. On a professional level, this text also can be used by trainees and medical practitioners looking for a comprehensive yet quick review of a disease. It should be considered a trainee's perfect go-to reference for any medical problem that he may need to brush up on. Moreover, the references at the end of each section offer validation of the information presented.

Overall, *2009 Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment* will serve as an excellent internal and ambulatory medicine reference to medical and nonmedical readers, allowing for quick access to information in the form of one complete text.

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**Case Files Internal Medicine.** 3rd edition. By Eugene C. Toy and John T. Patlan. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies; 2009. 580 pp. US \$32.95 Softcover. ISBN: 978-0071421911.

*Case Files Internal Medicine* (3rd edition) is an excellent internal medicine review book written especially for medical students in their clinical years. It is perfect for clerkships, sub-internships, shelf, and USMLE exams. Sized to fit in the pocket of a white coat for easy portability, this book offers an engaging and high-yield re-

view of internal medicine. It promotes active learning, using patient presentations and thought-provoking questions to encourage deeper thinking about clinical problems. The format will be comfortable for anyone who has spent time on the wards learning from patients and engaging in problem-based learning. The introduction begins with an explanation of how to think clinically and to maximize the use of the content. Sixty cases are presented that cover a wide spectrum of commonly encountered diagnoses seen in both inpatient and outpatient settings. Each case presentation is followed by a prompt for the diagnosis and the next step in management or treatment. These are followed by discussions on pathophysiology and clinical management, several boards-style questions, and lists of clinical pearls that all serve to reinforce concepts for the student. The questions reflect what would be seen on shelf and USMLE exams, and the answer explanations are cogent and relevant, especially when used in combination with the topic reviews. References are provided at the end of each case for students who desire to study more in-depth material. Overall, the writing is simple and easy to understand, and the images, algorithms, tables, and clinical pearls emphasize key points that can easily be found for future reference. This book is highly recommended to supplement internal medicine clerkships and sub-internships and to prepare for shelf and USMLE exams.

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***A Guinea Pig's History of Biology.*** By Jim Endersby. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; 2007. 499 pp. US \$14.21, Paperback. ISBN: 978-0674032279.

If you have ever wondered why scientists use animals as models to study human development and disease, *A Guinea Pig's History of Biology* by Jim Endersby is for you. This exploration through the last two centuries of biological discoveries is a perfect read for anyone, scientist or not, who is

interested in how the study of plants and animals gives us so much knowledge about ourselves. Endersby begins his story with horse breeders who wondered how a horse's physical traits were passed on to the next generation. He then explains how Darwin and Mendel used passionflowers and peas to investigate this same question. Through each model organism, Endersby describes the political, ethical, and cultural influences that affected the state of scientific progress. As scientific discoveries developed, so did the ethical concerns associated with those discoveries. An understanding of biology led to the ability to use zebra fish to study human diseases like muscular dystrophy, but along with it came the creation of genetically modified plants and animals. Endersby leaves the reader to make up their own mind on when the use of animal models is good and when it has gone too far.

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***Icons of Life: A cultural history of human embryos.*** By Lynn M. Morgan. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; 2009. 310 pp. US \$21.95, Paperback. ISBN: 978-0520260443.

When we think of museums and collections, the first things that come to mind are stuffed animals and skeletons. But early in the last century, some researchers started to collect more unusual, controversial items: human embryos. Lynn M. Morgan, a professor of anthropology at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, visits one of these collections and uses it as a starting point for her fascinating and well-written book entitled *Icons of Life: A cultural history of human embryos*. In it, she tackles the heady questions of whether an embryo is a person, how pregnancy loss has been viewed, and why embryos provoke such heated reactions when the term itself was unfamiliar to most people a hundred years ago. This is not a book about the history of stem cell research