



HANDBOOK OF DISEASES OF THE NAILS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

DAR de Barker, R. Baran and RPR Dawber
Blackwell Science, Oxford (1995)
177 pages. Price £27.50 (pbk)
ISBN 0-865-42907-3

Have you been sufficiently troubled this past year by patients seeking therapy for nail afflictions to consider purchasing text? Even general practitioners with a specific interest in dermatology tempted by de Berker *et al's* publication will find that is more a reference text than a handbook.

This book, amounting to 169 A4-type pages, is extremely comprehensive with a very clear layout which is well punctuated by colour photographs. At times, however, it is a slave to taxonomy and it frequently fails to give direction in its attempts to be comprehensive. I was most looking forward to the chapter on the therapy of fungal nail infections, surely the most exciting recent development for dermatologists and general practitioners alike. I am not a lot clearer at the end of this read. Chronic paronychia in childhood we are told responds to 'antiseptics, emollient, anticandidal and steroid combinations'. The range of therapies for chronic fungal nail infection are listed, but the nettle is not grasped regarding their comparative strengths and weaknesses.

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ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: A MEDICAL COMPANION

Alistair Burns, Robert Howard and William Pettit (eds)
Blackwell Science, Oxford (1995)
159 pages. Price £19.50 (pbk)
ISBN 0-632-03731-8

In our ageing society, the care for patients with Alzheimer's disease is becoming an increasingly important part of the daily work in general practice. This book aims to take a broad look at the management of this disease in the primary care setting, in which the majority of patients are treated. As a Dutch general practitioner, I have read it with great interest, and feel that the book meets its objectives.

After an interesting historical introduction about dementia as a clinical concept, the book begins with chapters on epidemiology, aetiology and biological basis.

The authors are clearly experts in their field; however, as new insights develop rapidly in Alzheimer's disease, it is obviously difficult to present and select issues relevant for general practice

in a concise and readable manner. The clinical picture of Alzheimer's disease is described in detail, although largely from a hospital consultant's perspective. The emphasis is on the end-stages of dementia, and the diagnostic possibilities and difficulties over time in general practice are only mentioned in one of the later chapters.

The third author, William Pettit (a general practitioner), has written an excellent chapter about the view from primary care, and as there is no cure for dementia, I feel more emphasis should have been put on care issues. The overall accessibility of the book to family doctors could have been increased by the greater involvement of William Pettit in the final stages of its development.

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SPORT, EXERCISE & MEDICINE

Jim McCracken and Idris Williams (eds)
University of Nottingham (1995)
Two volumes with an interactive PC disk
Volume 1, 182 pages; Volume 2, 172 pages
Price £37.50. ISBN 0853580448

There is a great need in this country for primary care to be more involved in sports medicine. Informed treatment and advice on problems concerned with sport and exercise are often required immediately. Until now, there has been a frustrating lack of up-to-date knowledge, data and advice available in an easily accessible form about the effect of exercise, and the various disabilities and chronic illnesses associated with it.

This new publication from the University of Nottingham has addressed this need. The contents have been edited by Jim McCracken and Idris Williams, and as befits experienced general practitioners and educators in general practice, the text is very clearly and logically presented. The various chapters have evolved from the 'Medicine' module (Special groups and health implications) of the successful Nottingham University MSC courses on Sports Medicine.

The publication has paid great attention to detail and concerns about exercise as it affects patients. There are chapters about the effect of exercise on all the major chronic illnesses and the problems that might occur. Other chapters cover the physiology of exercise and pregnancy, children and aerobic exercise, as well as exercise and sport for an ageing population.

There is a particularly thorough review of competitive sport for people with disabilities, which shows the wide and expanding