

A stitch in time

Practical plastic surgery for nonsurgeons. Nadine B Semer. Philadelphia: Hanley and Belfus, 2001 (ix + 390 pp). ISBN 1 56053 478 8.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK believes that injuries commonly encountered by primary care physicians (general practitioners) can, without appropriate corrective treatment, lead to disabilities that can ultimately destroy livelihoods and families. She also believes that providing basic plastic surgical training can empower primary care physicians working in remote circumstances to provide simple but effective treatment, utilising readily available equipment and minimal resources.

The author is a clinical instructor in the Division of Plastic Surgery at the University of California, Los Angeles. She has written a very readable book for medical practitioners with little or no formal surgical training who are working in remote areas. It deals with the surgical treatment of traumatic and thermal wounds and gives clear descriptions of plastic surgical techniques, from debridement, suturing and local anaesthesia through to skin grafts and various skin flaps. Other areas, such as skin cancer, cleft lip and palate surgery, breast surgery and the treatment of surgical infections, are also covered.

A third of the book is devoted to hand injuries, infections and other hand conditions and their treatment. Much of the book is basic general surgery, with the plastic surgery emphasis on meticulous technique and attention to detail. The aim is a good functional outcome and returning the patient to productive life as soon as possible.

Not only would this book be useful in the libraries of isolated medical centres, it would also be useful reading for junior medical staff and nurses in emergency departments. There are many good illustrations and it is written in a helpful and friendly style. With a recommended retail price of \$85.25, it represents good value for money.

Bruce Johnstone

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A serious guide to weight loss

Experts' weight loss guide for doctors and health professionals and all those serious about health. Garry J Egger and Andrew Binns. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2001 (x + 156 pp, \$24.95). ISBN 1865085774.

THERE ARE MANY BOOKS on the market which cater to the ever-increasing number of obese people searching for the ideal diet. At best these are based on some common sense and at worst they promote fad diets without any evidence of scientific credibility. For health professionals interested in managing patients with obesity there are review articles dealing with various aspects of obesity management, or large esoteric texts, which lack any real cohesive approach to the practical management of obese patients. The "popular books" (or equally dubious internet sites) on the subject often serve as a primary source of information for many health professionals. Alternatively, many practitioners consider the management of obesity just too hard and therefore not worth attempting.

Obesity has been recognised by the World Health Organization as a chronic disease. The complications of obesity lead to considerable physical and psychological morbidity and even death. Moreover, the prevalence of obesity has reached epidemic proportions and it is therefore incumbent on all health professionals to acquire the basic knowledge to deal with this very common health problem.

The *Experts' weight loss guide for doctors and health professionals and all those serious about health* provides a sound theoretical basis and practical approach to the management of obesity. The authors have extensive experience in the management of obesity and in training other health professionals to manage obesity. The information presented is comprehensive, scientifically sound, balanced, logically presented, easy to digest and well referenced. Best of all, the book is not only theoretically sound, but, most usefully, provides a step-by-step approach to managing obesity in practice.

I recommend this reasonably priced book unreservedly to all medical practitioners likely to treat obese patients.

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books received

250 cases in clinical medicine. Baliga RR. London: W B Saunders, 2001 (xiv + 651 \$90.20) ISBN 0702026247.

Clinical use of blood handbook. Geneva: World Health Organisation, 2001 (Folder with 7 plastic coated pages \$17.50) ISBN 9241545321.

Dealing with depression. A commonsense guide to mood disorders. Parker G. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2002 (xii + 146 pp \$19.95) ISBN 1865085138.

International travel and health. Situation as on 1 January 2002. Geneva: World Health Organisation, 2002 (viii + 193 pp \$43) ISBN 9241580275.

McMinn's interactive clinical anatomy. Abrahams PH. London: Mosby, 2001 (CD-Rom \$234.85) ISBN 0723432198.

McMinn's interactive clinical anatomy. Head and neck. Reynolds PA, Abrahams PH. London: Mosby, 2001 (CD-Rom \$271.15) ISBN 072343218x.

Natural compounds in cancer therapy. Boik J. Princeton MI: Oregon Medical Press, 2001 (xiii + 521 pages \$62.55) ISBN 0964828014.

Nutritional healing young today young tomorrow. Habibi S. Melbourne: Habibi Health Resources, 2001 (182 pp \$25) ISBN 0957922205.

Practical plastic surgery for nonsurgeons. Semer NB, Adler-Lavan M. Philadelphia: Hanley & Belfus, 2001 (ix + 390 pages \$85.25) ISBN 1560534788.

Sunny colonies and secret clouds. Baglin LRW. Melbourne: Williams Balgin and RK Williams Assoc, 2001 (282 pp \$40) ISBN 0646411829.

Systematic reviews in health care. A practical guide. Glasziou P, Irwig L, Bain C, Colditz G. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001 (ix + 137 pp \$65.95) ISBN 0521799627.

Transport, environment and health. Dora C, Phillips M (eds). Copenhagen: World Health Organisation, 2000 (81 pages \$37.80) ISBN 92 890 1356 7.

The wounded breast. Intimate journeys through cancer. Accad E. Melbourne: Spinifex, 2001 (xi + 538 pages \$29.95) ISBN 1876756128.

Your guide to e-health. Third millennium medicine on the internet. Yellowlees P. Brisbane: Queensland University Press, 2001 (x + 204 pages \$30) ISBN 0 7022 3220 3.

When someone you love is addicted to alcohol or drugs. Maclaine J, Townsend H. Sydney: Bantam Books, 2001 (xvi + 272 pages \$22.95) ISBN 1 86325 275 4.