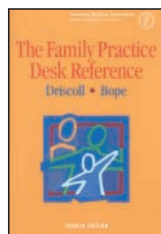


The family practice desk reference, 4th ed.

Charles E. Driscoll and Edward T. Bope



Chicago: American Medical Association; 2003. 1035 pp
US\$49.95 (paper) ISBN 1-57947-190-0

Rating: ***

Audience: Family practice residents, family physicians

Content: Family practice is a discipline that truly spans the spectrum of medicine. This fact makes it a challenging task to compress into one complete and concise guide the breadth of information that family practitioners need. This book makes a valiant effort to do just that. It is intended to be a print version of the quick and snappy family practice desk references available for handheld computers. It hopes to guide the family practitioner or resident through “the necessary nuggets of information about the most common conditions encountered by family physicians.” Organized by life-cycle and body system, each chapter consists of only tables, figures and references.

Strengths: The full breadth of family practice is covered, including topics on emergency and surgical care. It has a good layout, useful algorithms and easy-to-find information in tables. It cuts to the chase, avoiding the exhaustive detail that surrounds a diagnostic workup. Let’s face it: Who has time to read such detail in a busy family practice? Each table contains as much practical information as possible, for example by including pediatric dosages and options for drugs in pregnancy. Time that would be spent searching for another table is thus saved.

Limitations: Lab values are not in SI units, which is the standard most Canadian labs and clinicians use. This makes values difficult to interpret, and the extra effort required to find conversions

defeats the purpose of a quick desk reference. Also, detail is lost in images, which appear in black and white. The chapter on “Practice Management and Enhancement” is not entirely relevant to Canadian practice. Overall, this is a good, practical book that merits its price, but a Canadian version would have been ideal.

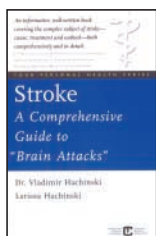
Kuljit Sajjan

Family Physician
Vancouver, BC

This book is available through your local book retailer, or through the publisher at www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/article/8183-6716.html

Stroke: a comprehensive guide to “brain attacks”

Vladimir Hachinski and Larissa Hachinski



Toronto: Key Porter Books; 2003 144 pp. \$19.95 (paper)
ISBN 1-55263-125-7

Rating: ***

Audience: Stroke survivors and their caregivers, family and friends

Content: Each year more than half a million North Americans experience strokes. Many thousand need rehabilitation. During such a crisis, friends and families must navigate through a maze of confusion and emotional upset and still try to understand stroke and recovery. Neurologist Vladimir Hachinski and writer Larissa Hachinski provide many answers in this book. In clear language, they help readers understand the various kinds of stroke and how they can affect physical functioning, thinking and emotions. Helpful and detailed information about rehabilitation is also included.

This book is for everyone affected by stroke — patients, their family members, friends and caregivers. Written for the lay person, it provides solid data on stroke and a detailed review of

current practice in stroke rehabilitation. The emotional impact of stroke is specifically considered.

The chapters on hypertension, smoking, alcohol and exercise provide general guidelines for the implementation of treatment strategies, but they are not intended to include the detail one might find in a clinical handbook.

Strengths: This text, a father–daughter collaboration, emphasizes the fact that stroke alters the entire family, not just the individual. An excellent quick-reference for those with pressing questions about stroke and stroke recovery, it answers many of the questions asked by patients and their loved ones. Topics include how strokes occur and what happens to the brain, major types of stroke and their effects, cognitive changes, speech impairment, limb weakness, swallowing difficulties, recovery and rehabilitation, and stroke prevention.

Limitations: More information in the area of stroke prevention could be useful in educating families and caregivers in the hope of reducing the burden of stroke and its aftermath. Whether health care workers will succeed in reaching even moderate stroke-reduction goals remains an open question.

A further challenge in writing about stroke is the fact that its epidemiology is changing, as are lifestyle trends and stroke-prevention strategies. Data from early stroke registries are now anachronistic, and theories of stroke pathogenesis have undergone a sea-change over the past decade or so.

Cinder Inglis

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This book is available through your local book retailer, or through the publisher at www.keyporter.com

Items reviewed are rated on a 4-star scale (4 = excellent)