



BOOKS

Physical Signs of Child Abuse: A Colour Atlas

Christopher J. Hobbs and Jane M. Wynne. 245 pp. Illust. WB Saunders Company/Harcourt Brace and Company, Philadelphia; WB Saunders Canada, Toronto. 1996. \$153. ISBN 0-7020-1778-7

Overall rating:	Fair to good
Strengths:	Excellent photographs of injuries typical of physical and sexual abuse
Weaknesses:	Introductory text and photograph captions too general and, in a few instances, could lead to misinterpretation of child abuse
Audience:	Primarily physicians in emergency or office practice but valuable to other professionals such as child welfare authorities and police

This is an excellent compendium of photographs of injuries seen in child-abuse cases. The few shortcomings are related to the text. The book serves as a reference that may assist in the diagnosis of traumatic injuries when abuse is suspected. The book is geared primarily to practising physicians, but it also provides some basic knowledge useful to medical students.

An introductory section on methods of examination and of photography is followed by the body of the book, which consists of photographs depicting different types of abuse. The many types of injuries and afflictions depicted in the photographs make the book comprehensive. The photographs are definitely the strength of the book; they are all excellent, and most of the captions are clear and helpful.

The introductory text, however, follows an outline format and does

not reflect the complexity of the subject. Some of the statements are too emphatic and may lead to misdiagnosis. For example, the book states that “children who . . . prefer to climb on the doctor’s knee show emotionally deprived behaviour.” Some of the information on signs consistent with sexual abuse is out of date, and there is no preface to a table concerning aging bruises, a very difficult but important medical-legal issue.

The section on failure to thrive and neglect includes excellent photographs and graphs to assist physicians with these diagnoses.

This book is very useful when abuse is suspected, but it should not be considered an authoritative reference text. Diagnosis should be confirmed by a specialist.

Angela Sirnack, MD
Child Protection Service
Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario
Ottawa, Ont.

Introduction to Minimal Access Surgery

Edited by Timothy H. Brown and M.H. Irving. 85 pp. Illust. BMJ Publishing Group, London. 1995. Distributed in Canada by the Canadian Medical Association, Ottawa. \$85.95 (\$71.95 CMA members). ISBN 0-7279-0885-5

Overall rating:	Good
Strengths:	Easy to read, good illustrations
Weaknesses:	Attempts to cover too wide a field
Audience:	Surgeons in training, general practitioners and medical students

This book was written at the request of the BMJ Publishing Group to illustrate the scope of minimal access surgery today. Its audience

includes surgeons in training, general practitioners and medical students. The style and format are those of the *British Medical Journal*, and the book is therefore easy to read.

The editors are well-known and respected British surgeons. The contributors are mainly consultant surgeons from teaching and community hospitals. The contents are wide ranging, and the chapters dealing with the history of surgery and surgical equipment are of interest. The section on training is very important but is less relevant to surgeons training in North America because, unlike in the United States and Canada, the use of live animals for training purposes is illegal in Britain.

The contributors cover the indications for surgery as well as the techniques and complications. Laparoscopic cholecystectomy is discussed in the greatest detail, as one would expect. The chapters on hernia, appendectomy, upper gastrointestinal disorders and colorectal surgery are covered more superficially but well enough to give the reader a good grasp of the subject matter. Laparoscopic appendectomy does not appear to be as popular as laparoscopic cholecystectomy. The complexity of the section on hernia repair reinforces the fact that many general surgeons are going to the “mesh-plug” technique rather than adopting the laparoscopic approach.

Sections on gynecologic, urologic, thoracic, ear, nose and throat, and orthopedic surgery are well illustrated and easy to read, but these topics are better dealt with in specialty books.

All in all, this is an easy book to read, good for quick reference and appropriate for the readers that it was designed for.

Victor M. Kaminsky, MD
Ottawa, Ont.