



**A Clinical Guide to Inherited Metabolic Diseases**

Joe T.R. Clarke. 280 pp. Illust. Cambridge University Press, New York. 1996. US\$74.95 hardcover; US\$29.95 paperback. ISBN 0-521-48064-7, hardcover; ISBN 0-521-48524-X, paperback

<b>Overall rating:</b>	Excellent
<b>Strengths:</b>	Accessible, clinically based approach; liberal use of tables and figures
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	Notwithstanding the relatively limited impact molecular genetics has had on metabolic diseases, the section covering this area (two pages) is rather thin. Use of acronyms throughout; one list of all abbreviations, with explanations, would have been welcome
<b>Audience:</b>	Pediatric house staff and general pediatricians

Inherited metabolic diseases are viewed with collective anxiety by pediatric house staff and general pediatricians alike; clinical complexity wedded to comparative rarity gives a common sense of apprehension. The masterworks, authoritative but abstruse tomes, address all biochemical ailments, frequently in overwhelming detail. The major pediatric textbooks contain chapters devoted to these disorders but are, of necessity, sparse in detail. Thus this text is a welcome addition.

Dr. Clarke has distilled over two decades of experience as one of Canada's best known clinical biochemists into a clinically based approach to inherited metabolic diseases. The book lends itself to easy access for the generalist: neurologic, hepatic and cardiac syndromes all have individual chapters, as do metabolic acidosis and acute metabolic illness in the newborn. The writing is lucid, direct and salted with personal observations. Clarke's teaching skills shine forth from each page. The

book's organization results in diseases being discussed more than once. This is a small price to pay when one is able to go from clinical vignette to, within 3 or 4 pages and a table or two, a comprehensible, rational differential diagnosis, and have a clear sense of what tests to next order and which chapter of Stanbury's to turn to.

Given the text's brevity and subject's complexity, some omissions are inevitable (one that this decidedly nonbiochemical geneticist came across was the absence of any mention of the loading test to identify at-risk ornithine transcarbamylase deficiency carriers). However, the book is clearly not meant to be the final word on metabolic disorders but to serve as a guide for initial diagnostic formulation and as a bridge between general pediatric texts and comprehensive, but less accessible, volumes. It succeeds admirably, effectively demystifying the anxiety-provoking world of inherited biochemical illnesses.

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**When a Parent Has Cancer: A Guide to Caring for Your Children**

Wendy Schlessel Harpham. 163 pp. HarperCollins Publishers, Toronto. 1997. \$34. ISBN 0-06-018709-3

<b>Overall rating:</b>	Good
<b>Strengths:</b>	The use of bold type, lists and chapter summaries allows patients to scan the book quickly if they wish. Practical, but not preachy
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	Repetitive
<b>Audience:</b>	Patients with cancer. Accom-

panying book, *Becky and the Worry Cup*, is for children up to age twelve

One of the questions most frequently asked by adults living with cancer who have young children, and perhaps the most difficult to answer, is "What should I tell my child?" *When a Parent Has Cancer* answers that question. Dr. Harpham is an internist who was 36 years old and had three young children when she was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Her family's experience through five years of diagnosis, treatments, remissions, relapse and ongoing uncertainty have led to this sensible, sensitive book.

Harpham provokes thought, provides guidance and proffers advice on parenting when one has cancer. She emphasizes the importance of honest, open communication with children, combined with reassurance that their basic needs will be met. She is clear that parents should determine the most appropriate intervention with each child. Being a single parent, being in an unstable marriage and parenting teenagers are outside Harpham's experience and are dealt with superficially.

Harpham has created a book that is simply written and easily read by anyone with a high school education. Key sentences are in bold type, and important points are summarized at the end of each chapter. (An editorial oversight resulted in an incomplete summary for chapter 4.) This allows patients to skim the book if they are too fatigued to read it carefully.

The book is full of practical examples, such as making a tape for a child's bedtime when a parent is in hospital. Medical terminology is avoided, except in Appendix 2, where there is a "Glossary for Kids" that defines cancer-related terms and sug-



gests how to explain them to children. Other appendices provide an overview of developmental stages and how these may guide parental responses, a list of resources for parents and children, and an annotated bibliography.

The accompanying, smaller book, *Becky and the Worry Cup*, was written by Harpham with input from her eldest child, and was reviewed by the younger two. It is written at third-grade level and explores the emotions children experience when a parent has cancer. It describes such concrete issues as chemotherapy, radiotherapy and hair loss.

*When a Parent Has Cancer* is a very readable book that will be hugely appreciated by parents with cancer and can be recommended to them with confidence.

**Amanda J. Sutherland, MD**

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## Emergency Triage

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Manchester Triage Group. Edited by Kevin Mackway-Jones. 156 pp. Illust. BMJ Publishing Group, London. 1996. Distributed in Canada by the Canadian Medical Association, Ottawa. \$41.95 (\$34.95 CMA members). ISBN 0-7279-1126-0

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**Overall rating:** Good  
**Strengths:** Indexed flow charts, introductory chapters, clear definitions  
**Weaknesses:** None  
**Audience:** Nursing, medical or other staff involved in the triage role

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This book, written by a group of physicians and nurses involved in emergency medicine, is designed to assist in the development of uniform guidelines for triage in emergency departments. It uses a 5-level classification system, with suggested time frames for patient assessment in each class. The initial chapters review basic definitions, the decision-making process, pain assessment and its role in triage, and management of specific types of patients, where individual characteristics may alter triage decisions (e.g., extremes of age, aggressiveness).

The bulk of the text contains flow charts that deal with chief complaints. Each topic is presented in a diagram, followed by notes and specific discriminators. There are charts for isolated topics (e.g., back pain, headache) and charts dealing with major incidents involving a number of patients simultaneously. The book concludes with basic definitions of all terms.

The introductory chapters are well written, and the flow charts are easy to follow. The chapter on pain assessment is especially useful because this is an area often ignored when establishing priorities, yet it is one of the most important



factors from the perspective of the patient and family. The flow charts are not designed to be read as text; they are too repetitious. However, with their indexes they are ideal for reference.

While primarily designed for emergency departments, this volume could be used in walk-in clinics or urgent-care centres to help determine which individuals would be better served in another type of facility. It would also be useful as a teaching tool for house staff taking calls in the family medicine setting.

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### The Ethics of Human Gene Therapy

LeRoy Walters and Julie Gage Palmer. 209 pp. Illust. Oxford University Press, Oxford, England; Oxford University Press Canada, Don Mills, Ont. 1997. \$42.95. ISBN 0-19-505955-7

<b>Overall rating:</b>	Excellent
<b>Strengths:</b>	Easily understood, concise description of science, techniques and possible uses of gene therapy; listing of ethical issues from a clinical ethics perspective
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	Little analysis of the collective effects of the use of gene therapy on shaping social attitudes and practices; incomplete discussion of social and ethical issues
<b>Audience:</b>	Health professionals, research ethics committee members, general public

The authors' purpose was to describe the science of gene therapy and to examine the major ethical questions. Toward the end of the volume, they state that their mission has been accomplished if they have stimulated the reader "to think about these possibilities in a calm and rational way and to reach their own judg-

ment." Most of the 153 pages of text and the 43 pages of appendices focus on describing and illustrating the current and potential uses of gene therapy. There are useful summaries of guidelines and opinion surveys.

The authors, a philosopher and an attorney, introduce genes and heredity in the first chapter. The next three chapters discuss somatic and germ-line therapy, and enhancement genetic engineering, and a fifth chapter considers public policy. Each chapter begins with a clear, well-illustrated discussion of historical developments and builds to the current developments.

Technical advantages are clearly described, without ethical assessment. For instance, the advantages of germ-line over somatic therapy are described as more effective when the disease 1) affects many different organs and disparate cell types (e.g., cystic fibrosis); or 2) is expressed in nonremovable and nondividing cells (e.g., Lesch-Nyhan syndrome). Of course, germ-line therapy is also effective beyond the individual, with the therapeutic effect passed on to subsequent children and a possible reduction of certain inherited diseases in the human gene pool. Technical discussions are followed by an evaluation of ethical arguments. Generally speaking, the authors take a permissive stance with respect to somatic and germ-line therapy and toward enhancement genetic engineering.

Their ethical discussions are probably the weakest point in the volume. The technical discussions receive about twice as much discussion as the ethical, and the approach is implicitly utilitarian. The authors admit that their analysis is shaped by their assumptions about health (species-typical function or improved function) and human nature (dissatisfaction with the human condition). Their fascination with the details of the technologies seems to connote a

bold embrace of genetic technologies without evaluation of alternatives. It is curious that the authors of such a historically and technologically grounded account seem to lack the humility and sense of fallibility that lead other authors to more cautious conclusions. For instance, they conclude: "genetic enhancements are an important part of the overall task of attempting to provide a better life and a better world to our descendants."

Overall, the volume is well written and readable for anyone who has taken a college or high school biology course. It will certainly stimulate reflection by interested physicians, members of research ethics committees, or members of the general public. Ethical reflection would benefit from supplemental reading through the perspective of feminist writers and persons with disabilities.

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### Slow Dance: A Story of Stroke, Love and Disability

Bonnie Sherr Klein. 365 pp. Alfred A. Knopf Canada, Toronto. 1997. \$29.95. ISBN 0-394-28161-6

<b>Overall rating:</b>	Good
<b>Strengths:</b>	Important insights into the challenges of stroke survivors
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	Fewer "characters" analysed in greater detail might have had more impact
<b>Audience:</b>	Health care professionals, stroke patients and their families

This book is a narrative account by its author, an award-winning documentary NFB filmmaker, of survival and partial recovery from a brainstem hemorrhage. It can be



compared to a National Film Board documentary with remembrances by family, friends, physicians and therapists, with voice-over by the patient. The cast is lengthy, with cameo appearances by hospital workers, fellow patients, rabbis and purveyors of alternative therapies. Locations include Montreal, London, Ont., Vancouver, Costa Rica, and the patient's mind. It is "directed" by the author, with her physician husband in a leading role. The reader's imagination supplies sound and images.

Scenes weave through initial symptoms, early diagnostic confusion, clinical deterioration, MRI demonstration of the lesion, surgery and the long road of rehabilitation. Subplots include feminism, family catharsis and the patient as advocate. But the dominant theme is tenacity and the need to maintain dignity while coming to terms with a damaged body trying to navigate through each new day.

There are varying examples of how the system can be manipulated by those who know their way around it. In the words of a friend: "Michael [Klein's husband] made up his own rules for your care." This may be discouraging to readers without such a connection.

The story includes their search for alternative therapies: acupuncture, quartz crystals, folded Japanese paper cranes, meditation tapes, Feldenkrais, Alexander technique . . . the list goes on.

She tells the story of a US stroke patient who struggled on her own without insurance as an example of problems with the US health care system. It invites speculation: How different would Klein's story have been if she had to trade places?

Physicians, patients, feminists and health care workers will have varying reactions to this book. But everyone will benefit from a better understanding of the many physical and emotional hurdles faced by the au-

thor. Osler was right: "Listen to the patient."

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[See the Jan. 1, 1997, issue for Klein's husband's experience and how he challenged the medical profession to rethink its views toward the physician as family member (page 53). — Ed.]

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### *Books and other media received*

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### *Livres et autres documents reçus*

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#### Endocrinology

**Endocrinology: Basic and Clinical Principles.** Edited by P. Michael Conn and Shlomo Melmed. 448 pp. Illust. Humana Press, Totowa, NJ. 1997. US\$125. ISBN 0-89603-349-X

#### Epidemiology

**The Global Burden of Disease: A Comprehensive Assessment of Mortality and Disability from Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors in 1990 and Projected to 2020.** Edited by Christopher J.L. Murray and Alan D. Lopez. *Global Burden of Disease and Injury Series*, vol. 1. 990 pp. Illust. World Health Organization; Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1996. US\$39.95. ISBN 0-674-35448-6

#### Family medicine

**Saunders Review of Family Practice.** 2nd ed. Edited by Edward T. Bope, Alvah R. Cass and Michael D. Hagen. 354 pp. Illust. W.B. Saunders Company/Harcourt Brace and Company, Philadelphia; W.B. Saunders Canada, Toronto. 1997. \$71.95. ISBN 0-7216-5817-2

#### Health care

**An Inventory of Quality Initiatives in Canada: Maintaining and Improving Quality in Health Care.** 2nd ed. Health Canada. 307 pp. Health Canada, Ottawa; fax 613 941-5366. 1997. Free of charge. ISBN 0-662-24978-X. (Includes inventory of Internet sites relevant to quality in health care issues. Also available online [[www.hwc.ca](http://www.hwc.ca)] or on computer diskette or audiocassette, or in large print or braille. Également disponible en français.)

#### History

**Jean I. Gunn: Nursing Leader.** Natalie Riegler. *Hannab Institute for the History of Medicine Series: Canadian Medical Lives.* Series editor, T.P. Morley. 263 pp. Illust. Fitzhenry and Whiteside, Markham, Ont. 1997. \$18.95. ISBN 1-55041-175-6

#### Neurology

**Neurological Investigations.** Edited by R.A.C. Hughes. Vol. 3 of *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry* books. 511 pp. Illust. BMJ Publishing Group, London. 1997. Distributed in Canada by the Canadian Medical Association, Ottawa. \$137.95 (\$114.95 CMA members). ISBN 0-7279-1080-9

#### Pharmacology

**Goodman and Gilman's The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics (CD-ROM).** 9th ed. Edited by Joel G. Hardman, Lee E. Limbird, Perry B. Molinoff, Raymond W. Ruddon and Alfred Goodman Gilman. Illust. McGraw-Hill Companies, Health Professions Division, NY; McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., Whitby, Ont. 1996. \$181.25. ISBN 0-07-864186-1

#### Surgery

**Practical Minor Surgery (CD-ROM).** David Crawford and Christopher Koo. Omni Media Associates and Harwood academic publishers, The Netherlands; Overseas Publishers Association, Amsterdam. 1996. Price not stated. ISBN 90-5702-007-6 (single user licence); ISBN 90-5702-006-8 (site/institution licence)