

be helpful for both primary care providers in training and in practice. As a reference book on the shelf in the office, it is a quick diagnostic aid and disease refresher for everyone. If you already own a Zitelli, you may not find too much benefit by adding this book. However, if you are in the market for an atlas, the \$79 price and detailed disease descriptions make this an attractive competitor to the classic Zitelli.

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**The Harriet Lane Handbook,** George K. Siberry, Robert Iannone, 15th edition, Philadelphia, Mosby, 2000, 1,042 pp., \$34.95, paperback.

For nearly 50 years, harried house-staff have stuffed their lab coats with *The Harriet Lane Handbook*, an invaluable compendium of materials to aid in the diagnosis and treatment of children, particularly in an inpatient setting.

The 15th edition is much more professionally produced and polished and is ultimately a much easier book to use than previous editions. It is also a bit larger; while

the 15th edition still fits comfortably in a lab coat, it is nearly an inch longer and, at 1,042 pages, 267 pages longer. This moderate expansion in size has resulted in an eminently more readable text. With a larger text font and the introduction of color, material that was crammed and cramped to near illegibility now is written in a clear, orderly fashion. Another valuable change that this expansion allows is the orientation in the vertical plane of tables and texts previously in the horizontal plane. Reading the Lane's formulary without turning the text sideways is a welcome new experience.

The fundamental format remains the same, with four chapters on acute care, a four-chapter formulary, and the remainder and bulk of the book dedicated to diagnostic and therapeutic information. The 15th edition contains three new chapters—psychiatry, surgery, and oncology—and contains many chapters with thoughtful expansion. The chapter with the greatest expansion and that has day-to-day utility for family physicians is the chapter on infectious diseases.

Sorely lacking from previous editions were guidelines on the

management of both common infections and potentially life-threatening ones such as “fever without localizing signs” and meningitis. The newest edition rectifies this shortcoming with comprehensive and easy-to-read tables and algorithms to guide clinicians in the treatment of common pediatric infections.

Those who have enjoyed and valued their Lane, but found it difficult to use, will find the 15th edition a far superior text. On the other hand, readers who have valued its compactness may balk at the slicker, bulkier Lane. The Lane tries to be all things to all people—a guide for the exotic and mundane, a comprehensive reference, a miniature red book, a formulary, an emergency manual, and a guidebook for the management of pediatrics in both an inpatient and outpatient setting. For the most part, it succeeds. If your old Lane is tattered and torn, or you are one of the few unfamiliar with the Lane, the 15th edition will be a welcome addition to your lab coat.

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