

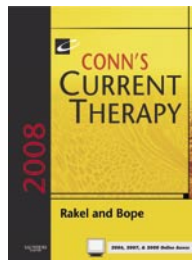
Book Review

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To the Editor: This is a comprehensive standard reference text for all involved in family medicine and primary care.

It focuses on a wide area with detail where needed, covers the wide spectrum of family medicine and is an excellent source for all levels of primary care, as well as level one and rural hospitals. In addition, the family physician in training will find this standard text invaluable and a good resource to consult.

The text has been thoroughly revised and updated. New topics and authors are chosen each year, which, according to the authors, keep the book "crisp in coverage, fresh in tone and brimming with the latest in practical advice" – I certainly agree with this. Exciting new developments in family medicine have prompted the introduction of several new chapters and the text certainly builds on the previous edition by providing the practitioner with a comprehensive view of topics encountered in family medicine and primary care. The logical and systematic way in which this text is presented ensures that the reader will effortlessly find the information and current references required.

Each chapter has been researched well by respected specialists whose opinions are informed by years of experience. The chapters contain key take-home messages in easy readable and clinician-friendly summary boxes on current diagnoses and current therapy. This, I believe, makes the book a very useful reference text and an excellent educational resource for undergraduate and postgraduate

students in the field of family medicine. Not only does it deal with current treatment on a vast spectrum of conditions, but purchasing the book allows free online access to the complete content of previous editions, which are fully searchable and even downloadable to PDAs. Lecturers will find the available image library, which provides all illustrations from the text for use in PowerPoint presentations, very useful.

Key features include the following:

- Division of the text in key sections.
- Discussion of new evidence and advances. Practical advice as well as good quality evidence is referenced when available, which is in keeping with sound, evidence-based practice.
- Addition of new chapters to cover the interests of an international audience. Certainly very useful for doctors in the South African and broader African context.

The book is indexed in a clear manner and current therapy is supported with the most up-to-date references on each topic. It is also surprisingly easy to read for such a comprehensive text and excellently laid out. Quick reference tables and boxes on current diagnoses and therapy are included, as are footnotes indicating when particular indications are not FDA approved.

All health workers will find this a useful reference and a standard and essential text that should be acquired by all hospital libraries, undergraduate and postgraduate students who require a succinct and lucid account of common problems encountered in family medicine and primary care. This refreshingly practical and easy-to-use text should be owned by all clinicians, whether early in their training or near retirement.

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