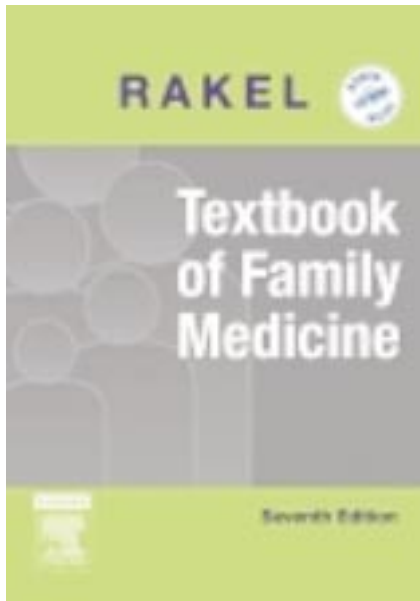


Rakel's Textbook of Family Medicine



Author: Robert E. Rakel
 Publisher: Saunders Elsevier, 1600 John F. Kennedy Blvd. Ste 1800, Philadelphia, PA 19103-2899
 Telephone: (+1) 215 239 3804
 Fax: (+1) 215 239 3805
 Website: <http://www.elsevier.com>
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Overall rating: Very good
 Strengths: Well organized, thorough, EBM, color pictures
 Weaknesses: Very heavy and big, difficult to carry around
 Audience: Family physicians and other primary care practitioners for example clinical nurse practitioners

This book offers information on all the common disorders that a general practitioner will see from day to day. You will not find the very rare syndromes in this text but it does cover a wide variety of subjects, from the bread and butter diabetes mellitus to chapters on evidence based medicine and complementary and alternative medicine.

The key points that are highlighted in blue boxes are very helpful in order to quickly scan what the section is about and to aid recall. Evidence based recommendations highlighted in yellow are also very nice to have and reassures one that the authors made an effort to be up to date and to emphasize especially the level A evidence based recommendations. The book also features good illustrations and photographs, especially in the dermatology chapter but also offers illustrations on clinical tests and imaging e.g. X-rays, etc.

Unfortunately the book is very big and heavy, making it quite clumsy and awkward to use. It will be good to use as a reference but you will not be able to carry it around with you. They do include a DVD with the book, but this unfortunately only features the illustrations in the chapters, demonstration of equipment used in the management of diabetes and studies of angiograms and ultrasounds for cardiovascular disease. It would have been nice if one could get the whole book on DVD so you could carry it around and use it on ward rounds, at the patient's house, when teaching students, etc.

Another suggestion that would have made the book more user friendly is having a short outlay of the contents of the chapter at the beginning of each chapter, rather than just firing away with the chapter. They could have even put the contents of each chapter in the front of the book under the main contents.

One must also remember that the textbook was written in America and that some of the measurements they use are different e.g. pounds to measure weight and mg/dl for blood sugar. Their laws might also differ, e.g. physician-assisted suicide is legal in Oregon and this has an impact on ethical decisions, but then

it is also interesting to know how things are done in other countries, what they have available for treatment, etc.

Lastly the small text makes it difficult to read but it was well written and easy to understand.

All in all it is a very well organized and thorough text for the primary care practitioner, even the ones practicing in South Africa.

Arina Schlemmer
 MBChB, MFamMed