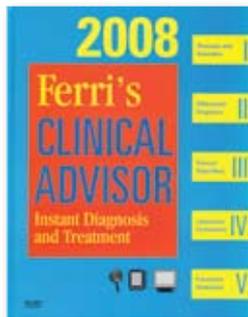


Ferri's Clinical Advisor 2008 Instant diagnosis and treatment

Ferri

Philadelphia: Mosby Elsevier, 2008
ISBN 978-0-323-04135-5 \$140.00



■ **This book is a handy desktop reference in five sections that is updated annually and includes electronic versions. The first and largest section outlines 1–2 page summaries of 700 conditions. The headings and subheadings are clear, consistent and logical. Once familiar with the layout it is easy to quickly find particular information. The detail is largely proportional to the topic's relevance and there is judicious use of diagrams, tables and photographs. The clinical information is high quality and relevant to general practice, only occasionally straying into physician territory.**

Section 2 lists differential diagnoses for symptoms and signs and, although inducing flashbacks to medical school, could prove useful when faced with an unusual symptom cluster.

Section 3 comprises clinical algorithms – particularly useful for less common or complex conditions. For example, the 'adrenal incidentaloma' flow chart outlines a logical strategy where I previously relied on the radiologist's recommendations. However, many algorithms are skewed toward specialist care and more alarmingly several deviate from best practice. For example the approach to 'dysuria and/or urethral/vaginal discharge' doesn't include chlamydia testing for vaginal discharge!

Section 4 is essentially a guide to diagnostic tests. This would aid working up unexpected results or following up unfamiliar tests and thankfully incorporates Australian units.

Section 5 on preventive health is irrelevant to Australian GPs – better to stick with the 'green book' at www.racgp.org.au/guidelines/greenbook.

The website version uses a similar layout but cannot display the entire condition simultaneously. The program has a reasonable search function but the book is superior.

I plan to keep Ferri's in my consulting room for quick reference. I'm impressed by the brevity and clarity of each entry and its overall comprehensiveness. I envisage using section 4 to interpret more complex test results and browse for differentials. I may gradually use the algorithms as an approach for conceptually difficult conditions. I will have confidence in the majority of information presented, although Ferri's, like any reference, has limitations.

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Essential Family Medicine

Robert E Rake

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Saunders
Elsevier, 2006

ISBN 13 978 1 4160 2377 7, \$105.00

Textbook of Family Medicine

Robert E Rake

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Saunders
Elsevier, 2007

ISBN 13 978 1 4160 2467 5, \$ 220.00



■ **Essential Family Medicine begins with a concise overview of the practice of family medicine with chapters covering areas such as the role of the family physician, the future of family medicine, problem solving, evidence based medicine, ethics, disease prevention and integrative medicine. Many chapters are of relevance to the Australian general practitioner but most are specific to family medicine practitioners in North America.**

The last two-thirds of this book present 82 case studies of common problems in primary care. The cases are interesting, well written and are presented in the familiar 'SOAP' format. Background information and evidence from the literature is included. The main limitation is a lack of up-to-date information with almost no literature post 2004. These cases would be of most interest for medical students or those approaching their Royal Australian College of General Practitioners examination. The book includes online registration with access to the full version of the book with another 56 cases of common problems.

Textbook of Family Medicine is a comprehensive reference text. Again, the first part of the book outlines the principles of family medicine but in more detail. These sections would be of most interest to the experienced clinician, with chapters ranging from psychosocial influences on health to evidence based medicine. The remainder of the text is a systems oriented reference text with useful summaries of key points, diagrams and interesting 'pearls and pitfalls' sections.

Both books are useful for background information on any area of general practice, but those seeking the latest evidence based information will need to look elsewhere.

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