

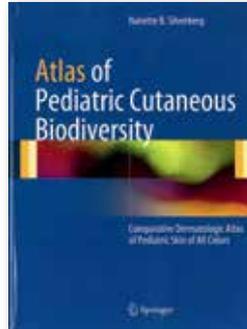
Atlas of pediatric cutaneous biodiversity: Comparative dermatologic atlas of pediatric skin of all colors

Nanette B. Silverberg

New York: Springer, 2012
ISBN 978 1461 435 631, \$139

A grand and complicated title for a slim hardback book by a single author who is a recognised expert in the field of paediatric dermatology, who also acknowledges the contribution of several other eminent practitioners.

The purpose of this book is commendable: as stated by the author it is to compare the presentation of skin disorders in children of different ethnicities and skin colour. Australia is a multicultural society and as in the United States, general practitioners can expect to see children from many different ethnic and racial backgrounds. It is imperative that doctors are competent interpreting signs of cutaneous disease in different skin types. Signs of skin disease can be more difficult to interpret in darker skin types. The clues which help in the diagnosis



of rashes and lesions in pale skin, particularly hues of erythema, are missing in dark skin. Dermatoses may also manifest different clinical signs in different skin types.

This is an attractive volume published in hardback on moderate quality but non-glossy paper. However, photographs are of mixed standard; most are of reasonable quality, but some do not show the

clinical features as well as might be expected.

This book is divided into standard chapter headings as is usually found in paediatric dermatology text books. The text includes general information about the disorders, followed by a brief discussion about the comparative presentation in different skin types. There are photographs to demonstrate these features.

It is not clear who the intended audience is – paediatric dermatologists, general dermatologists or general medical practitioners. Most of the

textual content would be assumed knowledge for any general dermatologist, let alone a paediatric dermatologist. There is not enough extra information about comparative features of different skin types to attract a specialist reader. This could be effectively accomplished in a chapter or journal article. If the intended reader includes general medical practitioners, then there are better text/atlas already published. The extra information provided about comparative dermatology does not justify the purchase of this book.

The premise of this book is interesting but the delivery is somewhat disappointing. I gained a few important insights into comparative dermatology, but not enough to encourage me to buy it. This book may have a place in institutional libraries and general dermatology outpatients, but would not be an indispensable reference in a general medical practice.

Dr Catherine Drummond
Canberra, ACT

Singsings, sutures & sorcery: A 50 year experience in Papua New Guinea

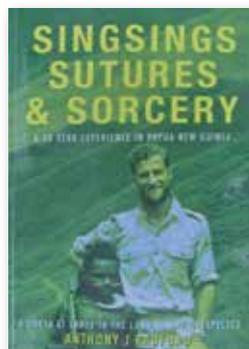
Anthony J Radford

Victoria: Mosaic Press, 2012
ISBN 978 1743 240 601, \$45

Tony Radford has had a 54 year association with Papua New Guinea. He began as a 'pikinini dokta' (a cadet medical officer), spent 10 years as a general medical officer and budding academic, and over the past 33 years has returned for various consultancies and out of friendship and respect for those that he had mentored and befriended.

He was a pathfinder in setting up a Department of Rural Practice to train future Papuan and New Guinean doctors for what would be their main task.

Dr Radford has always kept a diary, and this has informed his memory of his early years in New Guinea. His writing is clear, modest, often humorous, and very frank. His social worker wife, Robin, features prominently as a soulmate, wife, mother, community



developer, author, historian, amateur anthropologist and the provider of the only B&B in town. Her blood group is O (ie. a universal donor), so she was her husband's first port-of-call for blood in surgical and obstetric emergencies.

This book can be read like a novel, read in sections or used as a reference book. It provides a vivid account of the World War

II history of the AIF defence that saved northern Australia from Japanese occupation. You can also read the little known story of Kokichi Nishimura, the sole survivor of his platoon that was wiped out at Efogi. Nishimura built up a successful engineering business in Japan, but in 1974 he relinquished his business and moved to New Guinea to fulfil his promise of bringing home the bones of his comrades. He has also spent \$5 million in improving the lives of Papua New

Guineans. His last trip in the mountains of Kokoda was in 2010 when he was aged 91.

Dr Radford also describes the 1951 tragedy of Mount Lamington (now known as Sumbiripa), that burned the skin and fried the lungs of 10 000 Papuans and some expatriates.

You can also read about the history of Papua New Guinea, colonialism and the 'ugly Australian', New Guinea bureaucracy, anthropology, cannibalism, kuru and sorcery, iodine deficiency, Mycobacterium ulcerans, Kwashiorkor, pigbel and neonatal tetanus that worldwide, once killed 2 million babies a year.

This book is an informative and easy read. It is a work of love and respect for New Guineans. I recommend it to all those people with an interest in New Guinea, medical students looking for an elective, and young doctors looking for an off the beaten track experience.

Professor Max Kamien
Perth, WA