Publishers who wish to submit books for possible inclusion in Family Medicine’s book reviews section should send texts to Cathleen Morrow, MD, Family Medicine book reviews editor, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Department of Community and Family Medicine, HB 7015, 1 Medical Center Drive, Lebanon, NH 03756. cathleen.morrow@dartmouth.edu. Reviewers interested in writing reviews for publication should contact Dr Morrow as well.

All books reviewed in this column are available for purchase at amazon.com through the STFM portal at www.stfm.org/bookstore.


For the past 3 months, we have been using The 5-Minute Clinical Consult in our residency program in San Paulo, Brazil. It has proved to be a useful book in clinical learning and teaching. Its major strength is the ease with which one can locate the desired specific disease topic. Once you pick a sought-for diagnosis and find its page in the book, the layout allows you to quickly find options for therapy or alternatives in the differential diagnosis. The information is presented in a simple and easy-to-understand fashion, yet it is complete in relevant knowledge and evidence.

In our experience, other highlights have included the stratification of therapeutic measures, in which a variety of therapeutic protocols (for example, for community-acquired pneumonia) are presented in an organized fashion. We also found the subsection on alternative medicine therapies interesting and useful. In addition, The 5-Minute Clinical Consult features information on the accuracy, sensitivity, and specificity of diagnostic procedures and the differential diagnosis of common conditions such as myocardial infarction and urolithiasis.

Although Brazil has significantly different epidemiologic patterns of disease than the United States, we were pleased that the book also included topics on common infectious diseases such as amebiasis, trichomoniasis, malaria, leishmaniasis, and helminthiasis. It also includes topics on clinical emergencies and psychiatric disorders that have proved very useful in our clinical work here. Though not a problem for readers in the United States, the difficulties we confronted while consulting this book in Brazil were mainly due to differences in treatment protocols, common medications and their names, and the availability of diagnostic procedures.

Nonetheless, The 5-Minute Clinical Consult was a terrific addition to our residency library. In a nutshell, it is a great book with proven usefulness and helpful practice-oriented information, whether one is practicing and teaching in the United States or—using a bit of creativity and one’s clinical acumen—anywhere else in the world.

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With considerable enthusiasm we received this much anticipated book for review. “Skin of color” is defined as that of “individuals of racial groups with darker skin than Caucasians such as Asians, Africans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Latinos.” The population in the United States has experienced a substantial increase in the number of people of color, and this is directly reflected in the spectrum of dermatological patients. Yet there is a dearth of resources on skin of color, and current dermatological references are often not representative of what physicians currently see and treat. Dermatology for Skin of Color attempts to remedy this. It is long overdue.
Lead editors A. Paul Kelly and Susan Taylor are pioneers in the discipline of skin of color; both have published an extensive body of work. Contributors to this book also include almost every expert in the field of skin of color both nationally and internationally. In short, this textbook is the “Who’s Who” in dermatology for skin of color. Its intent is to provide clinical knowledge and a cultural understanding of skin of color.

Dermatology for Skin of Color is both a textbook and an atlas. It is divided into 16 sections. The first section includes chapters that provide a background to the field and its relevance to modern-day health care professionals. Tools are included for practitioners to self-assess and implement adequate multicultural competencies in dermatology. I appreciated the insight I gained from the chapters on Asian, Hispanic, and African American/Caribbean skin and health practices. These would be invaluable to any provider treating such populations. Chapter 9, “African American Skin Remedies and Folk Healing Practices” can easily serve as a quick reference for many commonly used herbal remedies.

Section 2 contains chapters that detail the basic science of skin of color. This section identifies the unique features in ethnic skin, hair, and nails that affect disease pathophysiology, presentation, and treatment. In chapters titled “Disease Epidemiology, Pathogenesis, Clinical Manifestations, and Treatment” Dr. Kelly and others discuss dermatologic findings in ethnic skin that may be erroneously considered pathologic. Included are helpful pictures of normal variations in skin color.

Sections 3 through 14 include comprehensive coverage of general dermatology. Each chapter begins with “key points.” This section also highlights distinct presentations of cutaneous disease in ethnic skin (in contrast to Caucasian skin). Disease epidemiology, pathogenesis, clinical manifestations, and treatment are part of each chapter. Ethnic differences in physiology and pathophysiology, and special considerations in treatment of skin of color, are underscored. Photographs accompanying each chapter illustrate disease presentations in Black, Asian, Latino, and Mediterranean skin types. In this admirable undertaking to deliver a complete resource on ethnic skin, the authors also include a section on “Cosmetic Dermatology.” This section includes topics ranging from “Cosmetic Procedures in Skin of Color: Chemical Peels, Microdermabrasion, Hair Transplantation, Augmentation, and Sclerotherapy” to “Liposuction.”

This text is definitely suited for medical audiences both in and outside of the United States. Topics reviewed in the sections “Dermatological Infections” and “International Dermatology” add even more universal relevance. Section 15—an international skin of color atlas with images from Asia, Africa, and Latin America—will be of value to clinicians as a photographic reference book that can be used during clinic when treating patients of darker skin types, whether they are from the United States or have immigrated here.

Dermatology for Skin of Color is more comprehensive than the earlier book Ethnic Skin. The photographs included can be helpful to correlate cutaneous disease in skin of color with the common descriptions and images of Caucasian skin offered in most dermatology texts. In the future, it would be wonderful to see more photographs included, especially those of variations within the same ethnic groups. Some photographs do not clearly show the captioned description. The only truly disappointing section of this book was on “Pediatric Dermatology.” This section is comprised of only one chapter with few images. However, other chapters included pediatric images, compensating somewhat for this weakness.

Dermatology for Skin of Color is intended for family physicians, internists, and dermatologists. It is an excellent reference for any physician who treats the skin conditions of patients with skin of color. Additionally, it will prove useful to primary care residents and medical students as a textbook reference.

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As family physicians who treat patients in pain every day, we are in an ideal position to appreciate this remarkable multi-disciplinary book. Pain and Its Transformations was written by scholars who study pain from perspectives as diverse as molecular and neurophysiology, musicology, and religious studies. The contributing authors vary from a research professor of anesthesia to a professor of neurology and from a professor of Buddhist studies to one of anthropology.

In Pain and Its Transformations you will find discussions of the major mechanisms of pain relief, including meditation and hypnosis via partial endorphin release. Well-referenced chapters discuss case studies of tribal rituals used to ameliorate pain. There is a surprising study of nurses on a pediatric orthopedic ward who discouraged expressions of pain by patients. This chapter is followed by a discussion of empathy by McGill University psychiatrist Lawrence J. Kirmayer, an entirely apropos essay that is the best I have ever read on the subject.

I was drawn to this book when I learned it was dedicated to the