

Book review

Pediatric orthopaedic secrets

Lynn T. Staheli, 449 pages, Hanley & Belfus, Inc., Philadelphia 1998

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This paperback is new in the "Secret Series" from Hanley & Belfus, including a whole series of books in various medical specialties and subspecialties. Unlike ordinary textbooks, it is designed as specific questions and answers, aiming at "questions you will be asked on rounds, in the clinic, and in oral exams". This structure requires that the reader has some background knowledge; therefore, it does not replace but supplements basic textbooks.

The contents include 429 pages plus a comprehensive index. There are no fewer than 97 chapters covering all fields of pediatric orthopedics. The Editor, Lynn T. Staheli, is a well known and experienced pediatric orthopedic surgeon as also are most of the 97 authors of the various chapters—most of them from North America. Generally, the writing is clear and direct and the chapters are short (2–4 pages). Nevertheless, the text contains surprisingly much information. There are relatively few illustrations. In addition to covering all conventional conditions in pediatric orthopedics, topics not usually found in orthopedic textbooks have also been included, such as philosophy of care, ethics, physician-parent relationship, integrating the disabled child into the community, and anesthesia, as well as separate chapters on casts, orthotics and braces, physical and occupational therapy, and shoes for children.

Although this book hardly provides much new information as compared to recent textbooks, it has the advantage of focusing on practical ques-

tions and problems we are frequently confronted with in daily clinical work. This is particularly useful for young doctors in training but is also valuable to more experienced colleagues as an efficient way of remaining updated in the large spectrum of common and rare orthopedic disorders. The book also contains a lot of useful information for pediatricians and general practitioners.

Although not reducing the high quality of most of the chapters, a few weaknesses should be pointed out. As a consequence of the multiauthored structure, some overlap between chapters has been difficult to avoid. For instance, clinical tests for hip instability have been covered in 3 chapters. Different classifications of physeal injuries may confuse readers without the necessary background knowledge. A few spelling mistakes should be corrected in the next edition. The reference lists are short and the references have not been incorporated in the text.

In conclusion, this book is an excellent contribution to the pediatric orthopedic literature and it should be available in the libraries of all orthopedic departments. Its greatest value would probably be for educational purposes in the teaching and examinations of medical students and doctors preparing for their specialty.

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