
Users' Guides to the Medical Literature: A Manual for Evidence-Based Clinical Practice (With CD-ROM)

by Gordon Guyatt, MD, and Drummond Rennie, MD, 736 pp, \$49.95, ISBN 1-57947-174-9, Chicago, Ill, AMA Press, 2002.

Users' Guides to the Medical Literature: Essentials of Evidence-Based Clinical Practice (With CD-ROM)

by Gordon Guyatt, MD, and Drummond Rennie, MD, 442 pp, \$34.95, ISBN 1-57947-191-9, Chicago, Ill, AMA Press, 2002.

All ophthalmologists suffer from information overload. We are inundated constantly with information from new textbooks, journals, newsletters, throwaways, e-mail discussions, as well as pharmaceutical representatives. Computer-assisted literature searches allow us to find information from our personal computers. However, information is not all the same. For example, textbook chapters are almost always out-of-date. Journals are peer reviewed, but case reports and case series fail to provide strong information on which to base clinical decisions. Review articles provide an overview of a subject, but they usually do not take into account the quality of information. Although recommendations from these articles may be correct, they often are just opinions and not based on evidence.

The challenge for ophthalmologists is finding valid information with which to guide our practice. One effective approach is the practice of evidence-based medicine. These 2 books, *Users' Guides to the*

Medical Literature: A Manual of Evidence-Based Clinical Practice (the Manual) and *Users' Guides to the Medical Literature: Essentials of Evidence-Based Clinical Practice* (the Essentials), describe how to incorporate this method into practice. They are written by 50 collaborators from the Evidence-Based Medicine Working Group. Both books are based on articles published in *JAMA* on how to use the medical literature. Additionally, both include a CD-ROM containing the printed material.

The books are divided into 2 major parts. Part 1 takes the reader through the steps toward determining (1) whether the information gathered about a clinical question is likely to be true, (2) what the information says about patient care, and (3) how the information can then be used in patient care. The section begins with a chapter on how to ask the "right" clinical question. Framing this question is essential because it determines the search strategy and the relevance of the found information. The section then moves on to finding, interpreting, and summarizing the evidence into an action plan. Part 2 moves beyond the basics to the teaching of evidence-based medicine. This section is written to provide instructors with additional teaching and discussion points. Part 2 mirrors part 1 in that every section in part 1 has a corresponding chapter in part 2 providing additional detail. For example, part 1 has a chapter discussing how to interpret a study describing a treatment. The corresponding chapters in part 2 discuss this issue further, with chapters on understanding bias and random error, hypothesis testing, and confidence intervals.

In comparing the 2 books, the Essentials differs from the Manual in that only a limited number of topics in part 2 are included in the Essentials. However, all the information from the Manual is contained

on the CD-ROM, which is included with either book. This CD-ROM makes using part 2 very accessible; only one mouse click is needed to move from the topic in part 1 to the corresponding extended discussion in part 2.

In summary, every practitioner of medicine should read the *Users' Guides to the Medical Literature*. An excellent "how-to" manual on the practice of evidence-based medicine, it should be required reading for all medical students and residents. The only issue is which book to buy. The Essentials contains the core information, but the included CD-ROM contains everything in electronic format. Unless you want to have the full book in print format, or you don't have access to a computer, the Essentials may be the best value.

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Scleritis (Fundamentals of Clinical Ophthalmology)

by Peter McClusky, MD, and Susan Lightman, MD, 144 pp, with illus, \$40, ISBN 0-7279-1586-X, London, England, BMJ Books, 2001.

This 144-page monograph is one of 8 in an expanding series by BMJ Books. It is a multiauthored treatise with 11 authors. It consists of 10 chapters, beginning with discussion of the anatomical and biochemical aspects of the sclera, followed by classification of scleral inflammation, pathology of scleritis, and chapters on episcleritis, anterior scleritis, posterior scleritis, infectious and surgically induced scleritis, complications of scleritis, investigation and management of scleritis, and surgical management of scleritis. It is a well-written, well-illustrated monograph with color photographs beau-

tifully interspersed throughout the body of the text rather than “tipped in” in the front, middle, or back of the text.

This little volume would be of value to all ophthalmologists, and the publishers might want to consider publishing such volumes as soft-cover rather than hard-cover text, not simply to reduce the cost but also to make it more likely that clinicians, particularly residents in training, might actually be able to easily carry the book from place to place.

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Clinical Eye Atlas

by Daniel H. Gold, MD, and Richard Alan Lewis, MD, MS, 1464 pp, with illus, \$129.95, ISBN 1-57947-192-7, Chicago, Ill, AMA Press, 2002.

This book is a comprehensive atlas with more than 1400 pages that covers a wide range of common and important clinical situations encountered in ophthalmology. Valuable features for the practicing clinician are the numerous accompanying clinical photographs and illustrations. The book is composed of 14 sections, including eyelids, conjunctiva, cornea, sclera, glaucoma, uvea, lens, vitreous/vitreoretinal disorders, retina, chorioretinal interface disorders, optic disc, strabismus/

ocular motility, neuro-ophthalmology, and orbital/lacrimal system, with a range of 5 to 36 topics in each section.

Each topic is organized into an outline that is highlighted with illustrations. The basic and recurring outline for each topic includes clinical features (description, course, and prognosis), basics (pathogenesis, risk factors, epidemiology, and genetics), diagnosis (basis, diagnostic procedures including imaging and differential diagnosis), and management and treatment divisions. This allows the reader to develop a standard, organized, and logical approach to each subject. The diagnosis and management divisions are highlighted in a pale yellow color, which is helpful to the reader as it provides quick referencing.

The highlight of the atlas is the amazing collection of clinical photographs and illustrations that are masterfully assembled to clarify and reinforce each diagnosis. The wide range of figures includes external photographs, slitlamp microphotographs, fluorescein angiograms, histopathologic slides, ultrasonographic and radiologic images, and artist drawings.

Although each topic is all-inclusive, may seem lengthy, and may be present in other textbooks, it is the distillation of information to brief summaries and sentences, together with the visual illustrations, that make this atlas a friendly reference or systematic review book. It would be a useful tool for the resident ophthalmologist in training or

any eye care provider in practice, including both generalists and specialists. Each topic covered is followed by a limited number of key references that can also be useful to the reader.

Even though there are many contributors to the atlas, the same style appears to be homogeneously followed throughout the book. The outlines also seem to be consistently prepared in such a way that when one reads the first few topics, it is very easy to follow all other topics in any section.

There are at least 1 or 2 color illustrations representing each topic, some of which are common conditions and others that go hand in hand with some rare and congenital diseases. In addition, there are some illustrations of other systemic findings that help the clinician identify a multisystem disease in which the eye is only one of many organs affected by the condition.

In summary, the authors have managed to include a remarkable collection of different types of illustrations that are applied in a clinically relevant setting to represent more than 200 different conditions seen in an ophthalmologic practice, together with a summary of the pertinent clinical findings, diagnosis, and management issues. The readership will find this atlas useful both as a quick reference to information and illustrations as well as a review of the salient clinical features.

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