Clinical Problem-Solving

Editors: Sanjay Saint MD, Jeffrey Drazen MD, Caren Solomon MD

Review by Vincent J Felitti, MD, FACP

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Vincent J Felitti, MD, FACP, is an internist in the Department of Preventive Medicine at the Clairemont Mesa Medical Office in San Diego, CA. He is a Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Diego. E-mail: vincent. j.felitti-md@kp.org.

Of the many medical books published each year, a respectable number are useful, but few can be said to be exciting. This is one of the exceptions. *Clinical Problem Solving* is highly recommended as an interesting and erudite book that is a pleasure to read. The book consists of particularly well-selected cases from the *New England Journal of Medicine's* Clinical Problem-Solving feature. Real cases are used. Interposed commentary is periodically provided as further information becomes available, much as we would gather further information as a case progresses. The commentary is first-rate and the illustrations crisp and useful. Lastly, an overall discussion of the case is provided.

The book starts with a useful but unexciting chapter on probability in clinical thinking. Next, is a well thought-out chapter on clinical decision-making. But the real action starts on page 31 where patient histories start to be presented in progressive fashion to expert clinicians who share their reasoning with the reader as further history, physical findings, and laboratory studies become available. The result is intellectually exciting and the 22 cases are of a length that is ideal for bedtime reading. ❖

The Reading Habit

I had just taken to reading.
I had just discovered the art
of leaving my body to sit impassive
in a crumpled up attitude in a chair or sofa,
while I wandered over the hills and far away
in novel company and new scenes …
My world began to expand very rapidly …
the reading habit had got me securely.

— *HG Wells, 1866-1946, English author*