

The Color Atlas of Family Medicine

by Richard P Usatine, Mindy Ann Smith, EJ Mayeaux, Jr, Heidi Chumley, and James Tysinger

Review by Susan Christenson, MD

The Color Atlas of Family Medicine is a wonderful compendium of 1500 clinical images supported by comprehensive, evidence-based information useful to any clinician. It is the kind of book that many of us who practice clinical medicine had hoped to find, but never succeeded; that is, until now. Whereas this book will definitely appeal to those who love to examine clinical photographs, it is also an excellent resource for almost every topic encountered in a standard primary practice.

This book was 23 years in the making. Its lead author began this project when he was a resident and has welcomed contributions from clinicians from all over the world. It reflects the wide variety of physical conditions that the family medical practitioner encounters with routine work. It also reinforces how difficult it is to keep these many images locked in memory for instant recall, as they are often encountered years apart. The authors (four family physicians and an obstetrician/gynecologist) have thoughtfully created three different indexing systems, one of which is on the inside of the book covers, making immediate reference quick and simple.

This atlas is organized into standard clinical and anatomic categories (eg, infectious disease, substance abuse, dermatology, the lung, the musculoskeletal system, etc) under which one finds common clinical topics (eg, Dermatology: Fungal/Tinea Versicolor). Each topic chapter has comprehensive and up-to-date, evidence-based, clinical information that is complimented by numerous, relevant photographs and figures. Each disease topic is usually introduced with an interesting patient story, followed by epidemiology, etiology and pathophysiology, diagnosis, differential diagnosis, management, patient education, follow-up, and resources (for both the patient and physician). A comprehensive

and useful bibliography follows each topic review as well. This book brings to mind the saying: *a picture is worth a thousand words*. It is a great resource for the solo clinician and a wonderful teaching tool.

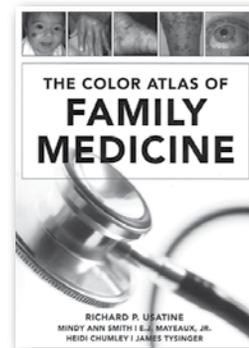
It is not surprising that the largest chapter is one that deals with dermatologic conditions. What separates this atlas from the colorful dermatology atlases with which we are all familiar, is the didactic primary care focus on

diagnosis, differential diagnosis, management, patient education, and advice. Once one has mastered the layout of this book, easy access to its contents makes it a great resource to share with patients in appropriate circumstances. Supporting the various chapter topics are many interesting images of radiographs, sonograms, microscopic findings and even cystoscopic and hysteroscopic findings. There is much to discover in this atlas and you will definitely enhance your clinical acumen.

It is impossible to cover it all, and with this in mind, I do wish there had been even more material in the chapters on infectious disease, neurology, and pulmonary conditions. Nevertheless, these chapters are interesting, informative, and useful.

In this day and age when new products must compete with the convenience of computer-generated information, this atlas has a unique competitive edge. This entertaining and useful 1095-page resource is available 24/7, regardless of whether or not the electricity is running. I have a very rural practice and this atlas has become an invaluable adjunct to my database of information at hand. In my opinion, it is underpriced and well worth the investment. It makes a wonderful gift to any student of medicine or clinician and will entertain and educate for years. I am truly grateful for its creation. ❖

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