BOOK REVIEW

What About Me? Puberty Education for Preteens
by Ann McGaffey, MD; Anne Boyd, MD; Maribel Cedillo, MS, RD; Jonathan Han, MD; Patricia Klatt, PharmD; Jill Landsbaugh, MS; Sarah McCollester MS4; Jennifer Middleton, MD; Maryellen Schroeder, MD

Review by Michael E Lynch
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Editor’s note: Helpful and well-written books are often as difficult to find as are capable reviewers of those books. Thus, at times we will review older books that fill needs in current times. This book, written a decade ago for children entering puberty, was “passed” by a surprising number of potential physician reviewers. Their avoidance was ultimately resolved by Michael E Lynch, a bright high school student in San Francisco who provides us this perceptive analysis.

—Vincent J Felitti, MD, Associate Editor

The book is not just a collection of information to be read, it contains many engaging anecdotes that make it much more readable for its target audience. Longer passages are embedded with questions, often the very questions that children are unable or are afraid to ask. These questions are not glossed over—they tend to receive multiple paragraphs of explanation, and different subtopics are given in “Myths and Facts Boxes” as another method of conveying important information, as well as activities that encourage kids to examine their own beliefs or simply quiz them on what they have learned. These additions to the book give it another dimension that keeps the reader interested.

What About Me? holds together its expository information by its open and sympathetic voice. The book is written in a fashion that is clearly targeted to young readers, yet it doesn’t make the common mistake of denying them respect. No question is even hinted at as being a “stupid question,” and an enthusiasm on the part of the authors for teaching this material permeates the narration links all of the specific questions covered in the book back to the simple feelings of curiosity and worry that underlie puberty and does its best to satisfy those feelings. This is a good and crucially informative book for any child to read, or to facilitate dialogue between children and their parents on any of the topics contained within.

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