

**Pneumonia Essentials**, 3rd edition. Burke A Cunha, editor. Physicians Press. 2010. Soft cover, illustrated, 413 pages, \$24.95.

Pneumonia is one of the most frequently encountered clinical conditions in the hospital and in the ambulatory setting. Given pneumonia's wide variability in etiology, it is not surprising that challenges exist in every aspect of pneumonia management, from considerations of diagnosis, epidemiology, and evaluation to prevention and treatment. In this third edition of **Pneumonia Essentials**, Cunha, who is chief of the division of infectious diseases at Winthrop University Hospital, Mineola, New York, presents a concise and practical guide to pneumonia overall, including the major categories of community-acquired pneumonia, nursing home-acquired pneumonia, nosocomial (hospital-acquired) pneumonia, tuberculosis, chronic pneumonias, and pneumonias in the immunocompromised host.

The text is organized in a fairly straightforward manner, beginning with a 20-page overview of pneumonia. There are 17 chapters, each of which includes an outline. The placement of the table of contents on the back cover is a nice touch for ease of use. The section on pneumonia clues is particularly well written and organized, with the differential diagnosis presented several ways, such as by symptoms, laboratory findings, infiltrate location, and patient subsets, to name a few. There is an entire chapter on the sputum Gram-stain, complemented by figures of 6 major pneumonia organisms on Gram-stain on the inside front cover. The bulk of the book contains detailed information about each category of pneumonia.

In keeping with the intended use of the book as a concise guide, there are several tables, throughout the body of the book, on the microbiology, epidemiologic considerations, and therapeutic considerations of each pneumonia category. Some chapters are better written than others. For example, the chapters on nursing home pneumonia and ventilator-associated pneumonia are somewhat simplistic. In contrast, another topic of considerable complexity, community-acquired pneumonia in immunocompromised hosts, is well presented and a wealth of information is nicely summarized.

The book contains an extensive chest radiograph atlas with well put together differential diagnosis tables for several radiographic presentations of pneumonia, including, among others, a focal infiltrate, solitary pulmonary nodule, and multiple infiltrates. The pearls and pitfalls section is organized by organism, with relevant clinical tips presented in short sections for ease of reference.

It is important to note that this book is not intended to provide an in-depth analysis of any particular aspect of pneumonia management. For example, there is very little discussion of pathophysiology, and the sections on prevention are quite scant. The evidence base behind the recommendations is not often discussed or emphasized. However, each chapter has references and suggested reading for users who wish to get more detailed information.

The last section is devoted to antimicrobial drug summaries, with drugs listed for ease of identification in alphabetical order by generic name. Each drug summary provides pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic data as well as toxicities and safety in pregnancy, in a very easy to find and read format. It was particularly gratifying that each antibiotic summary is extensively referenced—unusual to find in a concise text as this.

In summary, I recommend this book for the busy practicing generalist, infectious diseases specialist, or intensivist seeking a concise, easy to carry around reference for a quick guide to pneumonia. Whether on a busy in-patient service, or a full out-patient clinic, when confronted with suspected pneumonia, clinicians, especially house staff, will undoubtedly also appreciate the practical layout and to-the-point discussion.

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**Sooner or Later: Restoring Sanity to Your End-of-Life Care**. Damiano de Sano Iocovozzi MSN FNP CNS. Bloomington, Indiana: Transformation Media Books. 2010. Soft cover, 95 pages, \$12.95.

In recent years there has been increased attention on care at the end of life. Events such as the very public death of Terri Schiavo in 2005, and the misrepresentation of proposed provider payment for advance-directive counseling as “death panels” during the healthcare reform debate have contributed to this increased attention. As the baby-boomer generation continues to mature, and the incidence of people living with chronic and eventually fatal illnesses increases, improving end-of-life planning will be essential.

Advance care planning means different things to different people, and the lay public is largely unfamiliar with the concept. In general, advance care planning means taking steps to plan for the end of one's life, including writing an advance directive to physicians, establishing a durable power of attorney for healthcare, and in some situations completing state-specific paperwork regarding your resuscitation desires. Advancing medical technology, which can often physically sustain a human body for a prolonged period, has highlighted the need for thorough planning.

The intended audience of **Sooner or Later: Restoring Sanity to Your End-of-Life Care** is people facing a life-threatening illness and/or their families. The reader will probably need at least a high school education to understand the content, and have a least a basic understanding of how the United States healthcare system works. The author indicates that the purpose of the book is to guide the lay person and his or her family through the end-of-life planning process. Early in the book he briefly reviews the myriad treatment options that may be offered at the end of life, and these options are explored in greater detail later in the book. The early sections, like the entire book, are based on the author's experience and anecdotal knowledge; there are only 2 citations given in the book, both at the end.