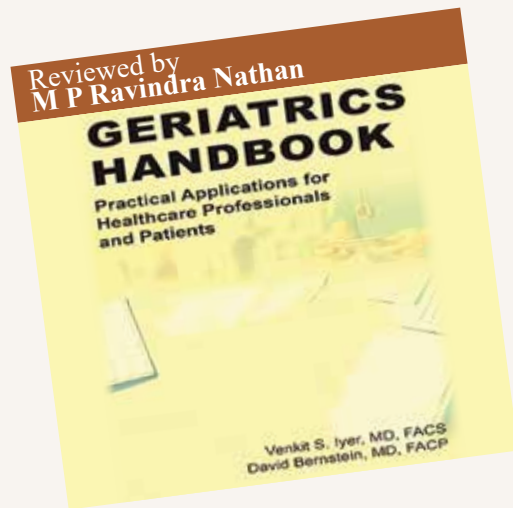


Book Review:

A Primer on Geriatrics

by Venkit Iyer, MD and David Bernstein MD



The population all over the world is aging and life expectancy is getting better in most countries, especially in the U.S. Currently, the share of the world population that is 60 years or older is just over 1 billion and this is expected to double by 2050. The number of 80 year olds is likely to triple by 2050 and there is every reason to believe the trend will continue. What does this mean?

As you advance in years, we are likely to develop more illnesses and disabilities and hence will need specialized attention and care from our physicians and other caregivers. In other words, we will be seeing and treating a lot of older or geriatric patients in the future. Another aspect is, these folks are also part of our large economy, doing many important services in the society. Whether it's health care industry, politics, art and literature or entertainment industry, you'll find them working diligently and efficiently. So, it behooves on all of us, not only physicians but others as well, to protect our geriatric population, and help them maintain their health, so they can continue their energetic lifestyle, age gracefully and not become disabled.

Geriatrics, as a branch of medical science, has become an established specialty on its own, all over the world. The study of Geriatrics will impact on many other disciplines and hence a good Geriatric Handbook will serve as a useful instruction manual as well as a great

reference source. Dr. Venkit Iyer's new book, 'A Handbook of Geriatrics', is a timely publication that gives details of all the common illnesses that affect the elderly population and appropriate management for each disease. It's a true primer in Geriatrics.



Venkit Iyer

The book is organized into five well defined sections, each one devoted to a special aspect of diagnosis and management of acute and chronic illnesses as well as preventive care, and finally, compassionate care as the patient reaches his/ her final days. Salient features of history and physical examination of the older patient with multiple medical and often some mental problems, are emphasized. What is very helpful in this book for medical students, residents, as well as the practicing physicians, is the way the entire book is presented as "Symptom-Based Approach" for the many illnesses they suffer from. The physician can carry the book with him/her for quick reference while going about seeing patients. For example, whether a patient presented with constipation or difficulty in swallowing or had an episode of memory loss, one can quickly refer to that symptom description in the book and get a feel for how to steer your work-up and get the right answers. Another salient feature is a list of medications with dosages incorporated at various sections and chapters, a handy reference to the readers. In addition, there are chapters that deal with 'Dietary recommendations,' 'Exercise to keep the body fit and healthy', 'Stress Reduction and Spirituality,' 'Medical Benefits of Yoga', 'Palliative Care,' 'Long-Term Care' and 'Hospice Care.'

Every practicing physician should read this book and use it as a ready reference in his or her practice. The book is also quite useful for any lay person to understand what is involved in the health maintenance of older population. And it promises to be a leading reference source in the field of Geriatric Care.

Review by M P Ravindra Nathan MD, FACC, FACP, FRCP (Lond) FRCP (Canada), FAHA