

ous agents make it worth the purchase.

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ATLAS OF COMMON PAIN SYNDROMES

BY STEVEN D. WALDMAN.

Philadelphia, PA: Saunders, 2002,
336 pages, 114 illustrations,
\$81.00 (hardcover)

Atlas of Common Pain Syndromes is a comprehensive review of the pain syndromes routinely encountered in medical practice. The author, Steven D. Waldman, MD, JD, is well published in the field of pain management, with four other titles in print. This book is primarily marketed for pain management specialists, anesthesiologists, and neurologists, although emergency medical services (EMS) physicians are considered in the secondary market.

The text is well organized into 78 chapters, each addressing common pain syndromes by body region. Each pain syndrome is comprehensively covered in a standardized format: the clinical syndrome, signs and symptoms, testing, differential diagnosis, treatment, complications, and clinical pearls. As an added bonus, the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-9) codes for each pain syndrome are listed. The treatment regimens recommended are complete, but many of the treatment options are not generally within the scope of practice or training of most emergency physicians. Many of the treatments are purely within the domain of anesthesia and pain

management specialists, including stellate ganglion blocks, epidural steroid injections, facet blocks, and similar interventions.

The four-color art and photographs in this textbook are quite good and unusual for a high-end medical textbook. The imaging studies are clear and appropriate. A considerable amount of money was spent on drafting reflective art of many of the various pain syndromes. However, although this art is attractive, these often add little information to the information in the text.

This textbook would be an excellent addition to an emergency department resource library. Emergency medicine resident and staff physicians would find this a valuable resource. The information on signs and symptoms, testing, and differential diagnosis is excellent. However, in today's busy emergency departments, we often do not have time to comprehensively evaluate each pain patient to the degree that is expressed in this book.

Again, this book would be an excellent addition to an emergency department reference library. Although it does not have any direct application to EMS, physicians would find the book useful in the hospital-based component of their practice. Overall, *Atlas of Common Pain Syndromes* is an excellent resource with limited applicability to EMS.

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PREHOSPITAL PROVIDERS' GUIDE TO MEDICATION

BY ALAN J. AZZARA.

St. Louis, MO: Mosby-JEMS, 2003,
511 pages, \$31.95 (spiral-bound)

As a university emergency medical services (EMS) educator, my experience with the *Prehospital Providers' Guide to Medication* by Alan Azzara, JD, EMT-P, has been quite positive. This recently updated publication has its own niche; it is larger than a field guide, but smaller than a traditional prehospital pharmacology textbook. The durable, wire-bound, pocket-sized manual has several attributes, one being portability and the other, conciseness.

My initial reaction upon receiving the manual for review was to consider whether the author, listed as a JD and EMT-P, would possess the formal academic medical background to do justice for a text involving pharmacology. Upon reading this succinct manual, however, I found the author possessed sufficient background to perform what this text is good at—conciseness.

Chapter one deals with pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics. The text does an excellent, if superficial, job of reviewing these concepts. However, for an initial emergency medical technician intermediate/paramedic (EMT-I/P) education course, this publication could not replace comprehensive pharmacology texts such as Bledsoe's *Prehospital Emergency Medicine*, Gonsoulin's *Prehospital Drug Therapy*, or Beck's *Pharmacology for EMS Providers*.

Chapter two, which deals with understanding patient medications, is a strength of this manual. In clear terms, this chapter thoroughly covers the questions paramedics should ask a prehospital patient about medications. Another strength of this chapter is the subsection on reading the medication label. My favorite subsection was on "patient medication as an assessment tool." As a registered nurse and paramedic with master's-level preparation, I've always believed this topic to be an under-taught and underappreciated area

in paramedic curriculums and education.

Chapter three's guide to pre-hospital medication presents a concise listing of EMS drugs. Students who prefer to memorize—but not necessarily think critically!—rave about this section. In the subsequent 177 pages, 78 national and regionally common EMS drugs are reviewed using the standard class, action, indication, and contraindication format. Included in this section are drug precautions, side effects, significant interactions, dosages (adult and pediatric), routes, overdoses, toxicity, treatments of overdose, and special considerations. This chapter presents a clear, concise, and informative description of each individual drug.

All the drug titles (generic and trade), classes, actions, indications, contraindications, significant interactions, dosages, routes, and side effects are complete to current standards. This in itself would not be a commanding quality in recommending this manual over any other, as this information is quite similar to what is found in many competing online and off-line sources. However, the *Prehospital Providers' Guide to Medication* receives great credit for its topics of special consideration, and information on overdoses, toxicity, and treating such difficulties. These areas are packed full of practical, commonsense application tips that might take a paramedic years to learn on the street.

Chapter four discusses the administration of prehospital medication, and chapter five addresses intravenous (IV) fluid administration. Similar to chapter one, these chapters present a basic review of medication administration and IV drip-rate calculation. To borrow from the back cover's description, this manual does deliver the "essential" information; however,

other pharmacologic educational materials on the market present this material in greater depth and use more illustrations.

Chapter six, another strength of this manual, discusses "drugs of abuse." I was particularly impressed with the subsection on assessment of the suspected drug abuser. Common emergency treatment schemes are presented for overdoses of narcotics, stimulants, barbiturates, and hallucinogens.

Chapter seven discusses pre-hospital treatment of common emergencies. Again, this chapter is a solid review, but should not be considered a substitute for the standard paramedic textbooks used in initial EMT-I/P education courses. As pocket-sized review source, however, it's excellent.

The last 269 pages consist of 14 useful appendixes and a comprehensive glossary. The handy appendixes provide a great, pocket-sized reference for over-the-counter drugs, drug trade names, herbal preparations, and fluid-replacement formulas; Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) algorithms; Apgar, Glasgow, and trauma scoring; diagnostic signs; weight and temperature conversion tables; and common abbreviations.

The last section I'd like to comment on is an area I personally find important—the index! For a practicing street paramedic, finding information fast is critical. The index in the back of this manual is thorough and complete, thus making finding the information exceptionally easy.

As an EMS educator, my EMS students rave about the "down and dirty" presentation of the pharmacologic material. But, alas, what does the average, entrance-level EMT-I/P student know about required pharmacologic knowledge under the 1999 National Standard Curriculum? Pharmacology as a

topic is adequately addressed in the commercially available paramedic textbooks. Certainly, both *Prehospital Emergency Pharmacology* and *Prehospital Drug Therapy* present a very detailed pharmacologic approach, which is appropriate for initial EMT-I/P education. Beck's *Pharmacology for the EMS Provider* has the added benefit of a full-feature nursing drug reference designed for EMS use.

In review, for what applications should the *Prehospital Providers' Guide to Medication* by Alan Azzara be recommended? As a used-car salesman once told me, "a seat for every heinie, a heinie for every seat." I've emphasized the terms "concise" and "pocket-sized" because this is an extremely durable reference text that can be easily carried in a laboratory-coat pocket during hospital clinical training. This manual also would pack easily into the paramedic's day-bag or fanny pack, and would be an excellent reference for practicing street paramedics. Azzara's work is an excellent, pocket-sized, *adjunct* reference for initial students, particularly those in hospital clinical training, or an excellent reference guide for practicing field paramedics. For initial EMT-I/P education, larger texts devoted solely to EMS pharmacology are certainly more appropriate. Having had experience using this text and the previous edition, I've always been very comfortable recommending the *Prehospital Providers' Guide to Medication* as a valuable EMS education supplement.

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