Book Review

The Vaccine Handbook: A Practical Guide for Clinicians, edited by Gary S. Marshall, 415 pp, with illus, $39.95, Philadelphia, Pa, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins (telephone: 800-638-3030), 2003, ISBN 0-7817-3569-6

Type and Scope of Book: A ready reference source on the practical aspects of vaccines and vaccinations. The publishers promise annual updates to maintain currency.

Contents: This paperback text comprehensively details practical information on vaccines for routine use as well as vaccines for specialized uses and circumstances, including travel and bioterrorism. Individual chapters focus on combination vaccines, vaccines in development, and passive immunization. The handbook addresses standards, regulations, policies, and safety aspects. Two special chapters, "The Immunization Encounter" and "The Business of Vaccines in Practice," are particularly notable. Key tables regarding routine recommendations, contraindications, and catch-up schedules appear in the first chapter, and information on required adverse event reporting is provided in the second chapter.

Strengths: Unlike the American Academy of Pediatrics *Red Book*, which covers the host of pediatric infectious diseases, this volume covers vaccines for both children and adults. Unlike Plotkin and Orenstein's scholarly encyclopedic *Vaccines*, the handbook is written for practitioners, not academics.

Deficiencies: The print is too small, and the book's dimensions are clumsy. Half the tables are oriented vertically and the other half horizontally. The index is incomplete, eg, the catch-up tables are listed neither in the index nor in the table of contents.

Recommended Readership: Vaccine providers everywhere, whether they are primary care practitioners, hospitalists, specialists, nurses, public health care workers, or office staff.

Overall Grading: ★★★★

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Grading Key
★★★★★ = *outstanding*; ★★★★ = *excellent*; ★★★ = *good*;
★★ = *fair*; ★ = *poor*.