



Z. NICHOLAS ZAKOV, MD, EDITOR

## A GUIDE TO CLINICAL LABORATORY DIAGNOSIS

By John A. Koepke and John F. Koepke  
Appleton & Lange

With current emphasis in medical practice on cost efficiency and the explosion in the number of laboratory tests available, this book is a helpful guide to appropriate use of the medical laboratory. Its problem-oriented approach guides the clinician in the use of laboratory testing after the initial history and physical examination. The book covers approximately 80% of the chief complaints in the inpatient setting.

A guide rather than a reference, the book aims to help the clinician sort through differential diagnoses of common medical problems, showing how various laboratory studies may be helpful in making a more specific diagnosis.

Medical students, house officers, and clinicians who want to review and update their laboratory approach to clinical problems will find *A Guide to Clinical Laboratory Diagnosis* helpful. It is clearly written and easily readable. Graphs and tables are well presented and illustrative of the points presented. Basic references to more specific reading are listed. The book is not comprehensive for most problems, however. Topics included are chest pain, anemia, acid-base disturbances, jaundice, diarrhea, and the acute abdomen. Guidelines for selection of transfusion therapy and tests to evaluate endocrine disorders are particularly well presented. A review of hematologic principles, with a clear outline of causes of anemia and abnormal bleeding, represent a major strength of the book. A brief section on drug monitoring is concisely presented. Sections dealing with interpretation of laboratory studies, including a brief discussion of how normal ranges are established, and organizing a laboratory on a hospital ward or in the office are well described. Other clinical problems that would benefit from greater description include heavy-metal poisoning and effects of excessive alcohol use.

Although much useful information is provided about laboratory testing, some clinicians may find fault with some of the tests indicated for certain problems. For example, hemoglobin A<sub>1c</sub> level is not described in the

assessment of problems related to diabetes, and folic acid level evaluation and skull radiographs are included in a recommended dementia evaluation. Other testing modalities, such as radiographic studies, electrocardiograms, pulmonary function testing, and tissue biopsy, are described briefly under various topic headings. Clues from the physical examination and history are also listed. This information, included seemingly for completeness, tends to detract from the objective of the book. The reader would have been better served if the discussion had focused on the various laboratory studies that could be used and avoided any discussion of other analyses.

For example, in discussing joint and muscle problems, the various clinical criteria for classification and diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis, rheumatic fever, and systemic lupus erythematosus are presented, whereas only a short description of laboratory studies useful for gout are outlined. Specifically, little is mentioned about quantification of uric acid levels. The selection of laboratory studies for rheumatologic disease is a particularly difficult and confusing area and could have been outlined in greater detail and thereby have been more useful to the young clinician.

This easily readable book is well suited for students and young clinicians and accomplishes its stated goal to convey the principle that a physician should "think of horses and not zebras when hearing hoofbeats."

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## HIGH-DENSITY LIPOPROTEINS: PHYSIOPATHOLOGICAL ASPECTS AND CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Edited by Alberico L. Catapano, Gianfranco Salvoli,  
and Carlo Vergani  
Raven Press

This volume presents a broad range of basic and clinical research findings on the metabolism of high-density lipoproteins (HDL). The opening chapter, a brief review of the HDL system, is helpful for those not familiar with this complex system. Subsequent chapters describe in greater detail an array of biochemical features of the

HDL system, including the expression of apoprotein genes, function of proteolytic enzymes, and receptor-mediated processes. These sections are sufficiently referenced and reasonably current. Several chapters deal with approaches in molecular biology that are assuming great importance in this exciting field.

The epidemiologic evidence relating HDL cholesterol levels to coronary heart disease is not presented in detail, but a chapter describing the metabolic aspects of HDL in hypertriglyceridemic patients should be of interest to practicing physicians because low HDL cholesterol levels are frequently encountered in these patients.

The closing section ("Diet/Drug Effects on HDL") contains too much material that is covered in previous chapters and only describes the effects of lipid-lowering drugs on HDL cholesterol levels. A discussion of the influence of other drugs, such as antihypertensive agents, might have been helpful here.

*High-Density Lipoproteins* will probably be most useful to clinicians and researchers who do not have an extensive background in the field of lipoprotein metabolism.

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## BEHAVIORAL COUNSELING IN MEDICINE: STRATEGIES FOR MODIFYING AT-RISK BEHAVIOR

By Michael L. Russell  
Oxford University Press

This well-organized, clearly written text is directed to physicians, psychologists, and other health care workers managing chronic illness that involves having the patient decrease unhealthy behaviors and increase healthy behaviors. A system of counseling is presented that is specific, systematic, practical, and learnable. Many tables summarize particular sets of skills needed, such as interviewing by asking open-ended questions, listening, and expressing empathy. There is an important focus on maintaining behavioral change once it is brought about. Other sections discuss specific problems of weight control, physical activity, smoking cessation, and management of stress.

The problem-solving format followed in the book is a process from concern to diagnosis to formulation of alternate solutions to implementation to evaluation and recycling. The behavioral approach ties the counseling to specific actions and describes which actions by the clinician are most likely to result in beneficial changes

carried out by the patient.

In its emphasis on the need for behavioral management in chronic illness, *Behavioral Counseling in Medicine* is commendable. In its belief that busy physicians can develop the skills needed to do behavioral counseling, it is questionable. The author recognizes that medical diagnoses are typically exclusive and psychological diagnoses are inclusive. He recognizes that the physician typically is an authority, and the patient is in a relatively passive role, while in behavioral counseling, the need is for a cooperative and mutually active coach-student relationship. It may be too much to expect a physician to switch roles and diagnostic styles, just as it would be too much to expect a psychologist to make the change in reverse. Additionally, it is unlikely that a physician would have the time or inclination to go through training to do behavioral counseling. A psychologist should be able to conduct training programs for psychology assistants so that they can do much of the counseling. This book would be excellent for such training.

*Behavioral Counseling in Medicine* recognizes that even with the best counseling many patients will not respond and gives specific guidelines for psychological referrals in such instances. Many people need to *think* differently if they are to act differently.

The text makes a case for more collaboration between physicians and psychologists and for more behaviorally oriented psychologists to be involved in health care. If physicians are motivated to involve behavioral psychologists more frequently in health care after reading this book, then the author's purpose will be indirectly served and patients with chronic illness would be well served.

I recommend this book to psychologists and their assistants in health care as an excellent practical guide to teaching and implementation of behavioral counseling in medicine.

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## MANUAL OF NERVE CONDUCTION VELOCITY AND SOMATOSENSORY EVOKED POTENTIALS

By Joel A. De Lisa, Keith Mackenzie, and Ernest M. Baran  
Raven Press

Although nerve conduction studies (NCS) have been an extremely important component of the electromyographic examination for three decades, no single reference describing the various studies and the technical aspects of performing them was available until