For the uninitiated, Dermatology is one of the most difficult branches of Medicine to grasp: use of a lot of dermatological jargon replete with tongue-twisting “latinized” names is enough to discourage the weak-hearted. In order to entice students to reading and understanding dermatology, there is a need to simplify the subject and present various topics in an appetizing manner.

The book entitled “Textbook of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprosy” by DM Thapa makes easy reading because it has reinforced known facts in a simple and forthright manner. All the major topics in dermatology have been covered and additional topics like new and emerging topical and systemic therapies; basics of dermatological surgery and cosmetology have been included. The chapters deal with the subject in a lucid form, giving the reader the principal facts that are easy to read and remember. The book gives the readers the essence without the detailed descriptive narrative of a textbook.

Dermatology is a science that depends a lot on images, be it clinical manifestations or microscopic findings. Dermatology cannot be learnt without having seen these images. In that sense, it is a visual science. Understanding this need, the author has taken great efforts to include a lot of high-quality color pictures and illustrations that depict and highlight various dermatological conditions. The book would make a lasting visual impact on the reader. This aspect definitely enhances the value of the book.

I admire Dr Thapa for his enthusiasm and the efforts that he has taken to understand the needs of today’s medical graduate students and medical practitioners. He seems to have studied the curriculum prescribed by the Medical Council of India and has taken care that topics prescribed in the curricula and guidelines are included in the book. As a Professor, he has recognized the deficiencies and weaknesses in the students as far as understanding the subject is concerned and he has taken pains to bring out just what he feels is needed. I think it would have been better if the author could have given more information in areas like HIV disease, lasers, dermato-surgery and cosmetology, which are going to be the future areas of emphasis in this specialty.

Even after 35 years of practice in dermatology, I would like to have a copy of this book by my side (though I have many such books), as in a few minutes; I can go back to the essence of a topic. This is definitely a utility book for students in our country and the subcontinent.

Reviewed by

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