sics of hormonal action and signal transduction, the book is divided into five sections based on physiological systems. Each section contains chapters devoted to specific disorders affecting the system in question, including (1) the hypothalamus, pituitary, adrenal axis and thyroid; (2) the reproductive system; (3) the metabolic system; (4) multi-system syndromes; and (5) bone and calcium. For each disorder, a terse review of normal physiology is followed by a detailed delineation of epidemiology, pathophysiology, clinical presentations, diagnostic tests, and treatment strategies that are often presented in shaded boxes for quick reference.

This clinically focused textbook is intended for medical students and residents who aspire to specialize in endocrinology. It is also useful for generalists because many of the conditions discussed are often first evaluated in primary care offices. Additionally, considering the changing demographics with the ongoing obesity epidemic, *Harrison’s Endocrinology* is to be applauded for allocating substantial space to obesity and metabolic syndromes. Evaluation and management algorithms accompanying every category of disease will prove invaluable in the clinical setting. Discussions of diagnostic tests and medications include up-to-date information on efficacy trials and best practice guidelines. In addition, the question set in the appendix serves as practice for board exams.

One of the characteristics that sets this book apart from other clinical manuals is its emphasis on genetics. This emphasis is probably derived from editor Larry Jameson, who was a pioneer in identifying genetic causes for endocrine disorders. Almost every chapter contains a list of genes whose mutations are implicated in pathogenesis. It is a shame, however, that explanations of the functions of many of the gene products are limited to a minimum in the text. Clinicians who want to dig beneath the surface would greatly appreciate a little more elaboration on the molecular mechanisms behind disease, perhaps including diagrams illustrating the relevant signaling pathways. Another shortcoming that may hinder the book’s popularity with students is that the text introduces a lot of medical jargon, especially names of clinical signs and maneuvers, without definition or description. Consequently, readers who are just beginning their medical careers may find themselves constantly looking up words as they read this book.

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Care at the Close of Life: Evidence and Experience. Edited by Stephen J. McPhee, Margaret A. Winker, Michael W. Rabow, Steven Z. Pantilat, and Amy J. Markowitz. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.; 2011. 616 pp. US $70.00 Paperback. ISBN: 978-0071637954.

*Care at the Close of Life: Evidence and Experience* fills a much-needed niche by providing guidance on how to care for patients facing progressive or terminal illnesses. Not only is it a wonderful source of information for medical professionals, but it also serves as an accessible resource for patients and their families to learn about a difficult topic: death and dying. Composed of carefully selected articles published previously in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (*JAMA*), *Care at the Close of Life* assembles the critical topics of palliative care into a concise and poignant read.

Each chapter of *Care at the Close of Life* is structured around a patient case study, which is further elaborated upon by the family’s, patient’s, and physician’s perspectives. These viewpoints are real-life examples and are given to the reader in a conversational nature, which illustrates the discussed topics in an extremely meaningful and relevant manner. Additionally, pertinent information about diagnostic and treatment options is interspersed throughout the chapter, which is summarized at the end of the chapter and followed by a self-assessment quiz.

*Care at the Close of Life* is an extremely comprehensive book that covers a
broad series of topics ranging from communication issues with patients to helping physicians deal with psychological and ethical issues. Although it is aimed at health care providers who care for patients facing serious illnesses, it is a relevant resource for anyone who wants to learn more about palliative care. Overall, Care at the Close of Life is a very informative and a must-read for those who are caring for patients with life-limiting illnesses. Not only does it give health care providers an understanding of what needs to be addressed clinically, but perhaps more importantly, it allows for providers to give insight into the experience, intuition, and compassion necessary to care for patients — qualities that often take years to develop.

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Translational Medicine and Drug Discovery. Edited by Bruce Littman and Rajesh Krishna. New York: Cambridge University Press; 2011. 361 pp. US $120.00, Hardcover. ISBN: 978-0521886451.

Both biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies work to generate products that will improve the quality of human life. In recent years, the development of therapeutics has evolved considerably. Translational Medicine and Drug Discovery explains the advances in drug development and discusses the flaws in the current methodology as well as how those flaws might be addressed.

The book begins with a brief discussion of the history of translational medicine and notes that the concept has prompted the formation of teams within pharmaceutical companies that follow drugs from early development through human trials. Subsequent chapters describe pharmaceutical advances in diabetes, atherosclerosis, obesity, bone disorders, neuroscience, and cancer. Although topics such as drug targets, modeling systems, and imaging techniques are discussed, the primary focus of the book is the development and use of biomarkers. The work concludes with an overview of coalitions recently formed to improve health care such as the Innovative Medicines Initiative, the Critical Path Institute, and the Biomarkers Consortium.

Many of the authors and the editors of Translational Medicine and Drug Discovery come from a pharmaceutical or biotechnological background, which somewhat narrows the scope of the book; very little of the material is derived from academic or government institutions. These authors offer valuable insight into industry, yet they also repeatedly touch on an interesting concept: the need to generate profits. Therapeutics and biomarkers are discussed in terms of risks and profits, and special attention is paid to minimizing failed investments. Interestingly, the book also offers several examples of how economic concerns have led to suboptimal research, which has in turn impaired the evaluation of novel therapeutics. Such examples underline the difficulty of improving patient care while addressing necessary monetary concerns. Although there are no obvious solutions, the final chapter of the book discusses several possible ways of balancing economics and therapeutics, such as facilitating company collaborations and generating new testing paradigms that will weed out false leads at an early stage of development.

While it is not an overly technical or exhaustive work, Translational Medicine and Drug Discovery is certainly not for the casual reader. It does, however, act as a useful overview of the principles behind industrial therapeutic development and will be of use to those with a scientific or medical background. Further, those who are interested in learning about the historical and ongoing development of biomarkers will certainly benefit from reading this book.

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