

Lead editors A. Paul Kelly and Susan Taylor are pioneers in the discipline of skin of color; both have published an extensive body of work. Contributors to this book also include almost every expert in the field of skin of color both nationally and internationally. In short, this textbook is the “Who’s Who” in dermatology for skin of color. Its intent is to provide clinical knowledge and a cultural understanding of skin of color.

*Dermatology for Skin of Color* is both a textbook and an atlas. It is divided into 16 sections. The first section includes chapters that provide a background to the field and its relevance to modern-day health care professionals. Tools are included for practitioners to self-assess and implement adequate multicultural competencies in dermatology. I appreciated the insight I gained from the chapters on Asian, Hispanic, and African American/Caribbean skin and health practices. These would be invaluable to any provider treating such populations. Chapter 9, “African American Skin Remedies and Folk Healing Practices” can easily serve as a quick reference for many commonly used herbal remedies.

Section 2 contains chapters that detail the basic science of skin of color. This section identifies the unique features in ethnic skin, hair, and nails that affect disease pathophysiology, presentation, and treatment. In chapters titled “Nuances in Skin of Color” and “Skin Lesion: Normal and Pathologic,” Dr Kelly and others discuss dermatological findings in ethnic skin that may be erroneously considered pathologic. Included are helpful pictures of normal variations in skin color.

Sections 3 through 14 include comprehensive coverage of general dermatology. Each chapter begins with “key points.” This section also highlights distinct presentations of cutaneous disease in ethnic skin (in contrast to Caucasian skin).

Disease epidemiology, pathogenesis, clinical manifestations, and treatment are part of each chapter. Ethnic differences in physiology and pathophysiology, and special considerations in treatment of skin of color, are underscored. Photographs accompanying each chapter illustrate disease presentations in Black, Asian, Latino, and Mediterranean skin types. In this admirable undertaking to deliver a complete resource on ethnic skin, the authors also include a section on “Cosmetic Dermatology.” This section includes topics ranging from “Cosmetic Procedures in Skin of Color: Chemical Peels, Microdermabrasion, Hair Transplantation, Augmentation, and Sclerotherapy” to “Liposuction.”

This text is definitely suited for medical audiences both in and outside of the United States. Topics reviewed in the sections “Dermatological Infections” and “International Dermatology” add even more universal relevance. Section 15—an international skin of color atlas with images from Asia, Africa, and Latin America—will be of value to clinicians as a photographic reference book that can be used during clinic when treating patients of darker skin types, whether they are from the United States or have immigrated here.

*Dermatology for Skin of Color* is more comprehensive than the earlier book *Ethnic Skin*. The photographs included can be helpful to correlate cutaneous disease in skin of color with the common descriptions and images of Caucasian skin offered in most dermatology texts. In the future, it would be wonderful to see more photographs included, especially those of variations within the same ethnic groups. Some photographs do not clearly show the captioned description. The only truly disappointing section of this book was on “Pediatric Dermatology.” This section is comprised of only one chapter with few images. However, other chapters included

pediatric images, compensating somewhat for this weakness.

*Dermatology for Skin of Color* is intended for family physicians, internists, and dermatologists. It is an excellent reference for any physician who treats the skin conditions of patients with skin of color. Additionally, it will prove useful to primary care residents and medical students as a textbook reference.

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**Pain and Its Transformations: The Interface of Biology and Culture,** Sarah Cookley, Kay Kaufman Shelemay, eds, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2007, 427 pp., \$52.50, hardcover.

As family physicians who treat patients in pain every day, we are in an ideal position to appreciate this remarkable multi-disciplinary book. *Pain and Its Transformations* was written by scholars who study pain from perspectives as diverse as molecular and neurophysiology, musicology, and religious studies. The contributing authors vary from a research professor of anesthesia to a professor of neurology and from a professor of Buddhist studies to one of anthropology.

In *Pain and Its Transformations* you will find discussions of the major mechanisms of pain relief, including meditation and hypnosis via partial endorphin release. Well-referenced chapters discuss case studies of tribal rituals used to ameliorate pain. There is a surprising study of nurses on a pediatric orthopedic ward who discouraged expressions of pain by patients. This chapter is followed by a discussion of empathy by McGill University psychiatrist Lawrence J. Kirmayer, an entirely apropos essay that is the best I have ever read on the subject.

I was drawn to this book when I learned it was dedicated to the

iconic psychiatrist and anthropologist Arthur Kleinman and his wife, Joan. Its substance grew out of a seminar series at Harvard featuring invited experts on pain from across North America. It is rich and well written. Two things especially fascinated me. First was a discussion of patients who burn or cut themselves to get relief from psychic pain, which many of us have seen in our practices. Second was a review of a study in which patients were hooked up to scalp electrodes in a sham study of simulated electric

shocks. Nearly half complained of pain and requested medication for pain relief even though no electric shocks were actually given. In a book with much discussion of internal modification of responses to painful stimulus, it was interesting to see that the same systems can actually create the sensation of pain where none is being induced.

This is a book one can read sporadically and come back to time and again as schedule permits. Yet, despite the heterogeneity and breadth of the chapters, the

book is also coherent as a whole. It's easy to imagine *Pain and Its Transformations* becoming a classic. I felt wiser having read it, and I recommend it to family physicians and other health care workers who still believe they can learn about something they see every day. They may be rewarded, as I have been, for their interest in this book by gaining sharper insight and greater empathy in their daily practices.

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