

# Book and Media Reviews

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Urgent Care Medicine

**Review by Todd Vermeer, MD, MBA**

Lacerations and Acute Wounds: An Evidence-Based Guide

**Review by Mark D. Levine, MD**

## Urgent Care Medicine

*Edwards TI, Mayer TA*  
*McGraw-Hill Professional, 2002*  
*660 pages, \$79*  
*ISBN 0-07-022068-9*

Urgent care medicine is, arguably, a separate field of medicine from emergency medicine. Many emergency physicians are extremely adept at managing critically ill patients, but have a more limited experience with the "walking wounded." Additionally, many primary care physicians will find themselves working in settings where they see patients with acute illness and injuries that are outside of the scope of typical office practice. Patients with less urgent complaints will seek urgent care treatment in the hopes of faster care than found in a traditional emergency department (ED) or physician's office. As EDs become ever more crowded, people with less severe complaints are likely to look to urgent care centers to better meet their needs.

In *Urgent Care Medicine*, Edwards and Mayer provide both a broad review of the major medical problems of patients presenting to urgent care centers and a brief overview of the administrative and management issues involved in urgent care. Taken as a whole, the book can serve as an

excellent primer for anyone considering building an urgent care center from the ground up. Additionally, it could prove very useful to the physician transitioning from a traditional office practice to an urgent setting by providing a quick reference source for the practicing physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.

The breadth of information covered in this text is impressive for such a compact volume. Coverage is given to presentations of patients who ought not to, but will, present to urgent care centers, such as major trauma, acute cardiac dysfunction and arrhythmias, shock, and sepsis. These are all problems that require the physician to already know how to manage the patient, and referencing a text while treating the patient is impractical. However, having a ready review available when preparing to work in an urgent care setting can be valuable for the physician who has limited experience with these complaints.

A book of this size cannot be expected to serve as a comprehensive database for any clinical problem. Most sections can be helpful in answering a quick question, but lack the depth of information to be a final reference source. Unfortunately, the chapters contain a bibliography that is not directly referenced from the text, which limits the reader's ability

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to quickly find more detailed information on a specific topic or point. All figures and tables from other sources are well referenced, which is helpful, but reference within the text would aid the reader seeking greater detail. Also, the lack of figures in both the adult and pediatric dermatology sections limits their usefulness in clinical practice.

Despite these limitations, I found the text to be adequate. Edwards and Mayer succeed in creating a quick reference source to aid clinicians. The orthopedic section should prove especially helpful to the primary care physician working in an urgent care setting. It includes a variety of radiographs and diagrams that give a clear depiction of major orthopedic problems, along with management descriptions and plans. Likewise, sections on back and neck pain, neurology, and abdominal pain provide a great deal of information in a very concise package. This text would be a useful adjunct in busy clinical settings.

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## Lacerations and Acute Wounds: An Evidence-Based Guide

*Singer AJ, Hollander JE  
F. A. Davis Company, 2003  
209 pages, \$33.95  
ISBN 0-8036-0775-X*

Medical students, advanced practitioners, and physicians who take care of lacerations or acute wounds on a regular basis would be foolish not to have this book at their disposal. From the first chapter on the physiology of wound healing to the

last chapter on antibiotic use, this easy-to-read, 209-page book is full of important, easy-to-find information about wound care. The accompanying charts and diagrams scattered throughout the text make even complicated concepts easy to understand.

The book starts with a brief but thorough overview of the anatomy and physiology of skin and the healing process. The book then moves into chapters on assessment and preparation, covering in great detail the types of analgesia available for wounds, along with their respective pros and cons. In addition, it makes a special point of mentioning procedural sedation for overly anxious or pediatric patients. Furthermore, a careful review of selected analgesic and amnestic medications such as ketamine is included, which may not be widely used in community hospitals.

There are 5 separate chapters on various wound closure options (including the introductory chapter of the same name) that explain the usefulness of adhesive strips, staples, skin glue, and sutures. Each chapter reviews the types of wounds best served by a specific method of closure, the patient who is most likely to benefit from the chosen wound closure, and the cost effectiveness of each method. Even less widely known closure techniques, such as using a patient's own hair instead of suture material, are discussed.

Having taught numerous medical students and residents proper suturing technique, I found the chapter on suturing techniques to be excellent. It serves as a superb review for experienced practitioners and an excellent teaching source for medical students, suture technicians, or others who want to learn the proper way of handling instruments, suturing wounds, and tying knots. The dia-

grams were easy to follow and understand.

The last few chapters cover specialty wounds, such as animal bites, human bites, foreign bodies, plantar puncture wounds, abscesses, and burns. Each chapter thoroughly covers the acute care management of these wounds; the puncture wound chapter in particular uses the evidence-based approach to the literature and current treatment regimens. Abscesses are notoriously hard to anesthetize and, thus, their drainage causes a great amount of discomfort to the patient, but the abscess chapter describes the most efficient manner of draining an abscess with the least amount of discomfort to the patient. The foreign body chapter covers each of the various radiographic modalities and the type of foreign body best visualized by each. It also makes a special point of discussing the explanation and documentation that must occur if a foreign body is not going to be removed from a wound site.

This book is an excellent reference for any physician who needs a handy reference on wounds and wound closure techniques. It is well organized and easy to read and understand, with easy-to-understand diagrams, charts, and figures. This book makes a great pocket reference (although it may be a little wide for a lab coat pocket) for any practitioner seeing wounds on a regular basis.

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