

Book Review

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Pender F. *Clinical Cases in Dietetics*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell; 2008. 281 pp; \$52.99.
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Clinical Cases in Dietetics is an entry-level textbook focused on improving critical thinking skills and patient-specific nutrition therapy. The target audience is the student practitioner, but the simulated situations could also be used by clinical nutrition managers to assess basic clinical knowledge and application skills of interviewees and newly hired employees. The purpose of this textbook is to translate clinical knowledge to actual patient scenarios, which discourages a “one-size-fits-all” approach to nutrition intervention. The list of contributors, although not interdisciplinary, is well rounded in terms of knowledgeable dietetic professionals, with a wide range of expertise, including nutrition support, renal, diabetes, intestinal failure, and pediatric specialties.

The 281-page text is divided into 7 sections, including an introduction, patient cases, diaries, referrals, mini-cases, commentaries, and appendices. The introduction provides an excellent overview of how to compile and interpret clinical and laboratory data using an analytic process. The cases are true representations of patients seen in practice with information provided from multiple sources, including the patient and physician as well as laboratory and anthropometric data; this allows the learner to practice applying all relevant data in the development of a therapeutic nutrition prescription. Diabetes, obesity, polycystic ovarian disease, renal disease, type 1 and 2 diabetes, stroke, and various types of cancer and bowel disorders are among the disease states addressed in the case studies. The diaries allow the reader to critically evaluate dietary intakes in the context of clinical symptoms and situations. The referrals, which consist mainly of a quick synopsis of the clinical situation from a physician’s standpoint, prompt the learner to

think about what additional information might need to be collected from the patient to achieve the desired clinical outcome. The mini-cases are more thought-provoking scenarios, focused on a specific situation, not necessarily a specific patient situation. Every case, diary, referral, and mini-case are stand-alone entities, making it easy to skip from one to another based on a preceptor or learner’s focus. The commentaries range in detail from skimming the surface to detailed intervention strategies. Last, the appendices provide a wide range of clinical information and reference data needed for the assessment of each patient case study, diary, or referral, including the appropriate tables used for calculations in the “Commentaries” section of the text.

One strength of this textbook is the presentation of patients in 3 very different ways, allowing the reader to practice comprehensive data collection and analysis. Other strengths are the introduction section and reference material in the appendices. In particular, the section differentiating between osmolarity and osmolality is well written and easy to follow. This is an area that dietetic students often need to refamiliarize themselves with when entering their internship.

Although this textbook is well written with commentaries relative to current practice, I did feel there were 3 limitations. These include lack of interdisciplinary authorship, inadequate detail in some of the commentaries, and bibliographical references that are not readily available to the reader.

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