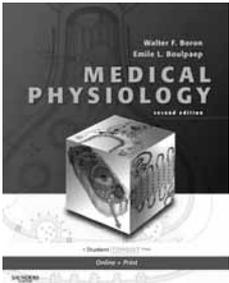


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Benson Chen is a 4th year medical student at Auckland medical school. He doesn't know what he will end up doing in the future but is currently happy reviewing books.



Medical Physiology, 2nd Edition.

Walter F. Boron, Emile L. Boulpaep
Publisher: Saunders Elsevier
2008
NZRRP \$147.00

Many medical students find physiology challenging to learn, mainly because it requires a competent grasp of difficult concepts, which one cannot simply memorise. However, a good foundation in physiology is essential in order to understand clinical medicine. Fortunately, a

recent addition to the textbook market has arrived: Boron and Boulpaep's aptly named Medical Physiology.

Big in size, colour and content, the second edition attempts to provide a comprehensive coverage of the medical physiology of the major organ systems from a cellular and molecular basis. The beauty of this book is the editors' attempt to show 'expertise of a multi-author book with the consistency of a single pen'. The editors have recast manuscripts written by Yale professors of physiology into a uniform style. The resulting text is consistent throughout which makes it easy to read and understand.

The book is divided into ten sections, structured around the physiology of the major systems. Each section begins with an overview of the organisation of the system being covered. Text in these introductory

chapters is presented in a form-function format, which serves as a good review of the basic anatomy and physiology of each of the organ systems. The subsequent chapters then comprehensively cover the physiology in more detail, usually with thorough explanations of the physical principles involved. A reference list is provided at the end of each chapter for those of you who are not satisfied by the sheer amount of physiology presented.

Physiology is usually best understood in a diagrammatic format, and Medical Physiology definitely delivers in this aspect. The text is accompanied by more than 800 high quality full-colour line drawings. I found these diagrams to be incredibly useful, as they clarified the difficult concepts explained in-text. Much of medical physiology deals with pathways, which are often poorly illustrated in physiology texts. Medical Physiology presents these pathways in easy-to-understand flow diagrams and line drawings, which feature balloon captions explaining key processes. The book also comes with internet access to a full online version, with additional features such as a question database reviewing important concepts.

Medical Physiology comprehensively links the molecular and cellular foundations of physiology to organ system physiology, however it fails to integrate any clinical knowledge of disordered physiology at great depth. Although relevant diseases are introduced in boxed sections, these are not covered in enough detail to be considered useful for the clinical years. If you are looking to revise physiology in your clinical years, Medical Physiology is definitely not for you. The sheer amount of detail is overwhelming, not to mention the multitude of equations and derivations which are sometimes distracting. But if you like learning physiology from a biophysics approach, or are looking for an alternative to standard physiology textbooks such as those by Guyton and Hall, or Berne and Levy, Medical Physiology should be on your bookshelf!