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**Clinical Examination: A Systematic Guide to Physical Diagnosis, 5th edition** Nicholas J Talley and Simon O'Connor  
Publisher: Churchill Livingstone, 2006. RRP: \$117.00

Preclinical years at medical school are by definition very theoretical. We learn about the mechanisms behind health and disease, and in what symptoms and signs disease will manifest itself in the patient. In tutorials and exams, patients' signs and symptoms are right there on paper, ready for us to apply our theoretical knowledge. One of the major challenges of clinical years is learning to elicit these signs and symptoms ourselves, via history taking and physical examination.

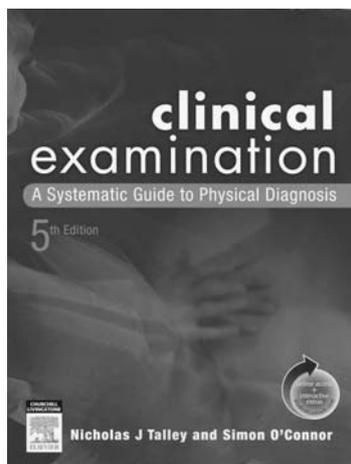
Talley and O'Connor's *Clinical Examination: A Systematic Guide to Physical Diagnosis* provides the map for this transition. It is a 2cm thick reference book with two chapters covering the general principles of history taking and examination, followed by eleven chapters going through the applications of this for each system.

The structure of the book is clear and it is easy to navigate: each chapter begins with history taking for the system concerned, then the physical examination, with photos and diagrams of many of the signs, followed by a section on the major diseases for that system and how they would present, a guide on X-ray review, if relevant for that system, and finally, a concise summary of the physical examination for that system, which is also represented in a one-page figure. These figures are useful to photocopy and take on the wards, as the whole book is too cumbersome. Unfortunately, four chapters are without this final one-page summary.

Besides this, there was little to criticize in Talley's. I really appreciated its evidence-based approach. Tables of "Good signs guides" illustrate the evidence-based weight to put on various signs for a given diagnosis. This evidence-base was reviewed and updated for this latest fifth edition. Compared to the fourth, the fifth edition has more colour and is more spaced out, making it fresher and more inviting. Also new to this edition is access to a website which contains numerous features, including heart and lung sounds, self assessment MCQs and excerpts of the book you can download to a handheld device.

An accompanying DVD is yet another complementary electronic feature. The ten examination video clips on this help provide a way of observing a physical exam as many times as you want, without having to pester your consultants or registrars!

It is useful for all levels of medical student, from the preclinical student wanting earlier integration of their theory with clinical knowledge, to the clinical student first learning examination technique, all the way to the registered doctor wanting to review or fine-tune their technique. Previous editions of this book are internationally renowned and translated in to seven languages. The fifth edition is like having a friendly, knowledgeable consultant in your bookshelf, and it will no doubt follow the success of its predecessors.

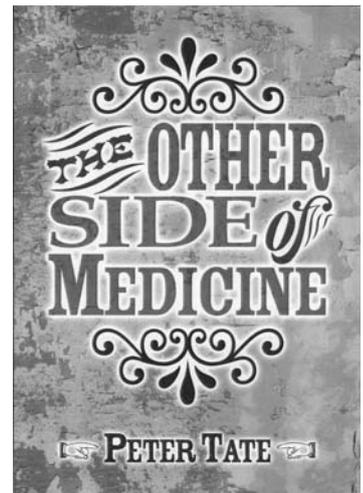


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**Anna Washer**

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**The Other Side of Medicine**  
Dr Peter Tate  
Publisher: Radcliffe Publishing, 2007. RRP: \$79.00



"So you're a Med Student huh? Wow, people must have said some pretty good things about you, I bet you're really smart." Then you actually geot through a couple of years of Med school ... Isn't it funny how it swiftly cuts you back down to size?

It is ideas like this from the satirical, sometimes pessimistic and above all honest Dr Peter-Tate that makes one feel relieved. Relieved that all those feelings of total inadequacy, frustration and fear of blunt consultants one might meet are totally normal. Relieved that even experienced, well-respected clinicians experience the same thing. In this compilation of short stories from his life as a General Practitioner in the UK and a trainer/assessor for the MRCGP training scheme, Dr. Tate describes humorous, sad and interesting events that reveal the often unspoken but unmistakably true side of medicine. Ironically enough, it's like a text about all the parts of medicine that cannot be learned from a book.

Comprising 26 chapters in just 120 pages, the book is in convenient bite sized pieces that make it an easy read. Although this book is written in from a UK perspective and therefore the systems, training and protocols are different to ours, the concepts are universal. Sadly there are no illustrations, but vivid descriptions of situations and patients easily make up for it. For example: "... the bags under her eyes were spectacular; her jowls hung like a bloodhound and her chin folded like a well-used fan...giving her a doggy look that was both sad and a little macabre. By 70 she was heroically ugly ... I focussed on the ulcers. They were huge, at least 6" by 6", they were covered in yellow foul-smelling pus and, no surely not, there was movement. There were maggots ... I gagged and fought desperately against vomiting over her urine and pus enriched carpet." The silver lining of these cloudy stories about the dreaded patient is the illustration that with a little perseverance, one can learn a great deal from such a case. This particular lady had not left her house in five years and was totally bedridden. Within a matter of months she ventured outside and up the road.

Dr Tate manages to boldly and humorously acknowledge medicine's discrepancies, fallacies and unexpectedly complex patients. However; best of all, he moves you past this, leaving you with the message that medicine is still able to achieve a remarkable amount of success, and the daily frustrations are no reason to give up altogether.

Suitable for any medical professional, this book can serve as an eye-opener for the situations you may encounter; or as a jovial yet knowledgeable reflection of those you might have already met.

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**Crash Course Pharmacology Second edition.** Dawson, Taylor, Reide.  
Faculty advisor: Clive Page. Publisher: Mosby, October 2002

Medical science is in the midst of a knowledge explosion. Being a medical student in these changing and challenging times is difficult. Medical schools the world over are switching to an integrated, problem-based system of teaching and learning.

The crash course series consists of both Basic science and Clinical titles. The series is written by medical students under the supervision of a faculty member. The second edition of the Crash course in Pharmacology was published in 2002. The book is divided into three parts: Principles of Pharmacology, Clinical Pharmacology and Self-assessment.

The book is primarily intended to serve as a quick and reliable reference and as a supplement to text books. The various topics are covered in a concise and interesting manner. The main section is Part II. This is divided into eleven chapters. These are cancer, infectious diseases, inflammation, pain and immunosuppression, peripheral nervous system, central nervous system, respiratory system, kidney and urinary system, gastrointestinal system, endocrine system and eyes and skin.

The system-wise coverage is primarily intended to facilitate system-wise integration across the various subjects. The chapters are covered in a concise fashion and care has been taken to include the latest developments. The tropical diseases section excepting malaria is not well covered. However, the book was primarily written for British students. The dose and regimens are not covered and will have to be obtained from text books.

Comprehension check boxes test understanding of the topics which have been read. Hints and Tips boxes draw attention to key content and helps to remember important points. These boxes are very effective. Simple diagrams and tables help to comprehend information easily. Each chapter ends with a list of short answer questions.

The book's predominant colour scheme is blue. The visual of a helmeted, white coated student riding a scooter is quite appropriate. The self-assessment section contains multiple choice questions (MCQs), Short Answer Questions (SAQs) and essay questions. The MCQs are in true-false format and the answers to the MCQs and SAQs are given.

The index is comprehensive and helps to access information easily. The book is well produced and its compact size makes it portable. The book also advertises an online resource, [www.fleshandbones.com](http://www.fleshandbones.com) which will be useful to students and preceptors. The book is manufactured using paper obtained from sustainable forests. This book will be a useful addition to a student's bookshelf. Cost may be a problem however for students from developing countries.



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