

## **Book Review**

### **Dermatology truly made easy**

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*Nicholas is an intern with a keen interest in how dermatological conditions represent the manifestation of systemic disease.*

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**160 Character summary:** A review of *Dermatology Made Easy* by Dr. Amanda Oakley; a concise resource and perfect introductory companion for any medical student with a dermatological disposition.

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**Tables/Figures:** nil Table, 1 Figure

**Word count:** 735 words

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## 1 **Dermatology truly made easy**

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3 Despite its unique complexities and significant prevalence of its subject, dermatology is often  
4 regarded as one of the great forgotten specialties within medical education. Many would  
5 argue that this is counterintuitive, considering the proud position of the integumentary system  
6 as the largest human organ. The skin often gives the first impression of a patient and provides  
7 a multitude of information regarding their overall health to the dermatologically-trained eye.  
8 For the untrained eye; however, most students would be the first to admit that they glaze over  
9 at the mention of a macule, lichenification or the Koebner phenomenon.

10  
11 The perplexing world of all things skin can be a little less daunting with Dermatology Made  
12 Easy. This accomplished resource combines Dr. Amanda Oakley's experience with over  
13 three decades in clinical practice, authorship of the world's most successful online  
14 dermatology resource, DermNet New Zealand, and current work as an adjunct A/Prof. of  
15 Dermatology at the University of Auckland. Oakley has ingeniously compiled sufficient  
16 detail to fulfil the appetite of both novices and professionals alike in this user-friendly guide.

17  
18 The first chapter appropriately introduces readers to a systematic diagnostic approach and is  
19 most useful for patients presenting with specific skin complaints. It provides a differential  
20 diagnostic tool categorised by symptoms, morphology and body site. This is a great way to  
21 learn some of the more common causes within each category (for example, morphologic  
22 conditions such as purpura or scaly rashes) and may assist in the retention of some of the  
23 more challenging descriptive terminology. This section also highlights particular pattern of a  
24 disease and how predilections for certain body sites can assist in diagnosis. While rare within  
25 comparable references, this introductory section is an extremely useful addition to the text,  
26 particularly for students.

27  
28 Subsequent chapters cover common day-to-day skin complaints, including infections,  
29 inflammatory rashes, non-inflammatory conditions and skin lesions. These are covered under  
30 subheadings in sufficient detail for the understanding of the salient points of each condition,  
31 including its aetiology, complications, management and prognosis. Each condition is  
32 summarised on a couple of pages and complemented with multiple high-quality clinical  
33 images. The author should also be commended for providing links to the free DermNet NZ  
34 resource for further details on topics mentioned, but not fully covered in the text. For  
35 example, if you are chasing even more extensive detail about a certain condition, such as on  
36 which arm of the chromosome genetic aberrations are located.

37  
38 In the concluding chapter, the author covers relevant investigations and treatments available  
39 for the plethora of dermatological conditions in the earlier chapters. This is a useful addition  
40 to provide a stepwise approach to the many management options available in the field.  
41 However, such an addition does seem slightly redundant because most topics already cover  
42 basic relevant pharmacological and procedural approaches to management.

43  
44 Although Oakley does cover important dermatological emergencies and focuses the text at an  
45 appropriate level for the target audience, some students may be disappointed with the lack of  
46 rare and intriguing integumentary conditions. Medical students will benefit from this text as it  
47 offers high-yield concepts, with prominent examples being skin cancer, infective dermatosis  
48 and dermatitis, all of which are frequently examined in both written and clinical settings.  
49 Furthermore, the text provides a useful template for conducting a dermatological history and  
50 describes the important visual signifiers to look for during an examination. These steps help

1 develop important skills, such as providing an approach for identifying the sometimes  
2 challenging aetiology of a drug eruption and its subsequent management.

3

4 Benchmarked against similar resources, such as Fitzpatrick's *Color Atlas and Synopsis of*  
5 *Clinical Dermatology*, Oakley's text is better value, well-structured, concise and provides  
6 high-quality imagery and portability. Despite the availability of free online resources such as  
7 DermNet NZ, this text provides a comprehensive overview of high-yield topics for medical  
8 students seeking a low-cost, high-quality resource that is readily available.

9

10 This book is the perfect companion for any student presented with a head-scratching rash in  
11 the clinical environment. With most texts originating from overseas markets, this 'pocket-  
12 sized' dermatology dynamite is a unique and valuable high-quality resource with local  
13 regional relevance. If you were considering purchasing your own copy of a dermatology  
14 textbook, look no further than Oakley as you will not be disappointed. This resource will be a  
15 valuable reference throughout your studies and years as a junior doctor, enabling the  
16 retention of challenging descriptive terminology and training the keen dermatological eyes of  
17 the future.

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1 **References**

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3 [1] Oakley, A. Dermatology made easy. United Kingdom: Scion Publishing Ltd; 2017.

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