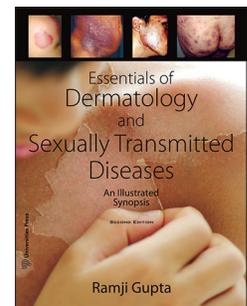


# Essentials of dermatology and sexually transmitted diseases: An illustrated synopsis

Editor: Ramji Gupta  
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The subject of dermatology, along with its sister specialities of sexually transmitted diseases and leprosy, has gradually expanded during the last few decades due to a vast explosion in knowledge about various diseases. The subject has evolved to include a number of sub-specialities such as dermatosurgery, aesthetic dermatology and pediatric dermatology. Newer vistas in the etiology, pathophysiology and treatment of various diseases have resulted in the subject expanding to a degree which may be quite bewildering to the uninitiated students and untrained graduates. Consequently, standard textbooks have increased manifold in thickness and volumes. However, in this maze of academic intricacies, the basics of dermatology may be lost somewhere among the advanced data supplied in abundance. In this complex scenario, a book dealing with the essentials of the subject along with illustrations which bring the diseases closer to the reader's eyes should be a welcome addition to the rapidly expanding literature of dermatology.

Dr. Ramji Gupta is a reputed academician in the arena of Indian dermatology. His experience in dermatology exceeds four decades during which he has published a good number of books and about 75 research papers in national and international journals. With this vast knowledge and experience in his kitty, it is natural that he would empathize with the plight of undergraduates and general practitioners. This sympathetic understanding has been well expressed in the preface to the first edition of this book wherein he states: "I hope this book will fulfil the educational needs of undergraduate students as well as be useful to general

practitioners with interest in dermatology and sexually transmitted diseases."

The treatise, being on paperback, has been designed to be quite handy for the reader. For the undergraduate, it should be easy to carry in his bag to the clinics. It is divided into 25 chapters covering most diseases of the skin in a brief and comprehensive manner. The text being in bulleted note form should be easy to remember for the novice students and practitioners. However, extreme brevity has at places led to some shortfall in information and quality. For example, except for protection no other function of the skin has been mentioned. Some important classifications such as those of leprosy, tuberculosis, alopecia and genodermatosis are missing. A few important diseases such as steroid-modified dermatophytosis, acrodermatitis enteropathica, cutaneous malignancies and reactions of leprosy including Lucio phenomenon are not properly elaborated. Similarly, a few diseases seem to have been misplaced in wrong chapters e.g., erythema multiforme, Stevens–Johnson syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis have been mentioned in the chapter of allergic disorders. Similarly, one would have liked to see immunobullous disorders and papulosquamous disorders as separate chapters rather than being clubbed with the collagen vascular disorders and miscellaneous disorders, respectively.

Dermatology is a unique speciality where the visual acumen of the clinician plays a vital role in the diagnosis of diseases. Here lies the importance of photographs to illustrate the diseases. Dr. Gupta has done ample justice to

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the description of disorders not only by claiming that the treatise is an “illustrated synopsis” but also by including as many as 584 images in the entire book. However, the visual impression and subsequent knowledge about diseases depend basically on the contrast, brightness and clarity of the photographs. Unfortunately, this is a gray zone in the book and there is an immense scope of improvement in the quality of the images, some of which appear to be quite hazy. Overall, Dr. Gupta has to be commended for his laudable effort to cover the large number of diseases spanning a major part of dermatology, leprosy and sexually transmitted diseases in such a concise and lucid manner. One only hopes that in the subsequent

edition the lapses mentioned above will be adequately rectified.

***Arijit Coondoo, Anupam Das***

Department of Dermatology, KPC Medical College and Hospital, Kolkata,  
West Bengal, India

**Correspondence:** Dr. Anupam Das,  
Building - “Prerana” 19, Phoolbagan, Kolkata - 700 086,  
West Bengal, India.  
E-mail: anupamdasdr@gmail.com