One sign of sleep medicine maturing as a specialty is the proliferation of books and other educational materials on sleep disorders. This book is aimed at a broad audience of students and practitioners across the spectrum of those interested in sleep.

In only 12 chapters, all aspects of sleep medicine are covered. The longest covers the basic science of sleep in a thorough way with just enough detail. Separate chapters cover assessment, drugs, and circadian rhythm disorders. The rest are organized around cardinal symptoms, including excessive daytime sleepiness, insomnia, dreams and nightmares, motor disorders, and medical causes of abnormal sleep. Two chapters are syndrome specific, on obstructive sleep apneas and central sleep apneas, respectively.

Many tables, charts, and diagrams are found that could easily be copied into an effective little pocket reference, should a reader be so inclined.

References are thorough but not exhaustive (or exhausting). Many are reviews from Sleep or Sleep Medicine Reviews, and many are up to date as of 2004. There is also a suggested reading list of 18 other books on sleep medicine, most of recent vintage.

A special feature of the book is appendices containing 10 questionnaire-type instruments for assessment of sleep symptoms and disorders. These are referenced in the relevant chapters.

This book is readable, as many British texts are. The spellings are occasionally quaint. A well-written single-author text is a rarity, and this one is a pleasure to read. If I could only own one the many sleep texts I currently own, this would be it. I highly recommend it and prefer it to a recent American publication of similar scope.

Disclosure Statement
Dr. LaWall has indicated no financial conflict of interest.

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Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine, Vol. 2, No. 3, 2006