Preface

The volume of information that today's OB/GYN practitioner needs to know is staggering and growing rapidly because of new basic research and clinical discoveries made daily. There is a critical need for both medical students and practicing physicians to have easy access to relevant information in a concise and carefully organized manner. This goal is difficult to achieve because 21st century medicine is characterized by a vast quantity of clinically relevant information. That is why the goal of this textbook is to clearly and concisely present the *essential* knowledge needed to practice state-of-the art obstetric and gynecologic medicine.

Women's health and the field of obstetrics and gynecology are critically important to the overall health of every society. Indeed, the health of women and their newborn children are key determinants of the potential of a society for advancing. The Association of Professors of Gynecology and Obstetrics has developed consensus learning objectives for medical students on clinical rotations in obstetrics and gynecology. These objectives, modified to focus on the most important and common clinical problems, are the basis for the extensive amount of material presented in this handbook.

Each chapter is presented in a clear, consistent manner and, where appropriate, begins with the definition of a particular condition, its common manifestations, and how it is routinely diagnosed. This is followed by a discussion of the prevalence and epidemiology of the condition, its etiology and pathophysiology, detailed information about the methods and protocols for its screening and/or detection, and the most recent, evidence-based information about its management. Each chapter uses photographs, tables, and other figures to present critical data and ideas, and ends by emphasizing the key clinical points. Within most chapters, an "Evidence" box is included to provide readers with exposure to how high-quality research information is used to guide clinical diagnosis and treatment. These "Evidence" boxes provide the kind of clinical information that inform the modern practice of OB/GYN medicine.

Medical students do not learn by a bolus infusion of a massive quantity of information. Rather, they learn through a continuous cycle of reading, thinking, talking, and doing. The purpose of this handbook is to assist the student and practitioner in this constant cycle of life-long learning and, more importantly, to offer the most evidence-based approach to the diagnosis and treatment of real OB/GYN patient problems.

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