In recent years, many reports published by the Dutch health authorities have cited the Emergency Department as the weakest link in the acute care chain. Although many doctors are trained to systematically approach trauma patients, training doctors to systematically deal with a medical emergency is one of the major omissions in basic and postgraduate medical training. In contrast, the percentage of patients presenting with acute medical problems, especially geriatric patients with multiple co-morbidities is increasing. Although many English language books and training courses have been introduced in the Netherlands to address this problem, a book aimed at the specific needs of the Dutch medical care system was lacking. The recently introduced SBMS course and this book "Medische spoedsituaties de systematische benadering (Medical emergencies, the systematic approach)[freely translated]" which was primarily written as pre-course material for the training programme is a very welcome addition to the existing scope of medical books written in Dutch. The book seems to be the result of a unique collaboration between emergency physicians and acute medicine physicians and the authors are well known in the fields of emergency and acute internal medicine. The book covers a wide range of topics relating to emergency care and is very well written and easy to read.

The authors seem to have used the end-terms in the curriculums of emergency physicians and acute physicians to compile the order of the topics. The book can therefore certainly be recommended for trainees of emergency medicine and internal medicine. In addition it can also be recommended for other very important specialties involved in emergency care, such as cardiology, neurology, surgery, intensive care, anesthesiology, psychiatry and even radiology. In our opinion, even family physicians and emergency care nurses could use this book as reference material. The book covers a wide range of important topics. However, an addition of a chapter dealing with acute geriatric care and related problems such as polypharmacy and delirium may be a welcome addition as would also, a chapter dealing with (therapeutic) hypothermia, hyperthermia.

In conclusion, this book is well suited for any doctor dealing with acute medical patients in the emergency department and in-hospital patients. The book certainly belongs on the bookshelf of any practising doctor dealing with acute patients.

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