Ronnie Ann Rosenthal, Michael E. Zenilman, and Mark R. Katlic (eds): Principles and Practice of Geriatric Surgery

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As the geriatric population of the United States and many other areas of the world increases, a more intense focus is being brought to bear on the prevention and management of illness in this group. Although this multi-authored volume is primarily concerned with surgery in older adults, the first eighteen chapters covering 232 pages and grouped into two sections, covering the Physiology of Aging and Social/Societal Issues, will be of interest to those in preventive and community medicine. Invited commentaries in the remaining eleven sections often contain information textured by preventive concerns as do some of the individual chapters.

Section II of this volume, which is new, is introduced by Dr. Michael E. Zenilman, who is associated with the School of Public Health at the State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center, and the Department of Surgery at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. As he cogently observes in his opening essay to this section, "To provide the elderly patient with quality care, we must be

well versed in recognizing and addressing frailty and disability, not just controlling the established co-morbidities of cardiac, pulmonary, kidney, and endocrine systems" (p. 138). There are nine very valuable chapters in this section, covering issues such as the demography of aging and disability, defining quality of care in geriatric surgery, ethics in clinical practice, palliative care and decision making at the end of life, surgery in centenarians, and the effect of advancing age on physician performance. This last chapter is quite unique in that it discusses physician performative and cognitive abilities with advancing age.

Most of this volume is organized around the major organ systems with special reference to the interests of surgeons and other clinicians. However, there is much in it that will be of great interest to those in preventive medicine and community health, and those who work with the elderly in senior centers and community-based programs that serve seniors. The book is well organized, and its coverage is very comprehensive.

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