

Nursing Health Assessment

A CRITICAL THINKING, CASE STUDIES APPROACH



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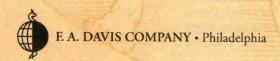
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EDITION

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Dedication

To my patients and students, who have taught me so much.



Preface to Students

Dear Students,

Welcome to F.A. Davis's *Nursing Health Assessment: A Critical Thinking, Case Study Approach*, second edition. Assessment is the **first step** of the nursing process and probably the **most important** because your assessment **directs the rest of the process**. It does not matter what your outcomes and goals are if you "missed it" on the assessment!

Assessment is a **thinking**, **doing**, **and feeling process**. You need to think as you act and interact with your patients. **Think critically** as you proceed through the assessment process and make clinical decisions.

Assessment is a skill, and as with any skill, the more you **practice**, the better you become. This book will walk you through the assessment process, but it is up to you to develop the skill. As a beginning practitioner, focus on learning the normal. Once you are able to identify the normal, if something abnormal occurs, you will know! Initially, you may not be able to identify the abnormal, but you will know that it does not belong. Don't worry; with practice you will be able not only to identify the normal, but also to differentiate it from the abnormal.

You will use assessment in every area of nursing. As you perfect your assessment skills, you will find that you can apply them to all levels of health care, in the community, in acute care, in the home, and in long-term care.

F.A. Davis has a variety of resources available to meet your learning needs and develop your assessment skills. Here is a brief guide on how to use them.

- Interact with the case study in the text. This is your patient.
- Review your anatomy and physiology, apply the assessment process, and identify your learning needs through the self-evaluation exercises in the applications text.
- Listen to the heart, breath, and bowel auscultatory sounds again and again until you can clearly hear each sound.
- Visit DavisPlus for additional resources.
- Validate your assessment findings and perfect your skills by using your pocket guide in the clinical area.

Consider this text your guide to assessment. Take ownership of it as you learn to assess. Consider the case studies as your patients. As you interact with them, you will learn assessment. Every patient encounter provides you with an opportunity to assess, so seize the opportunity. You can learn so much from your patients. Make each encounter with your patient a learning experience as you develop the skill—and art—of assessment. So practice, practice! And have fun as you develop your assessment skills.

Patricia M. Villon

Patricia M. Dillon, DNSc, RN



Acknowledgments

I would like to begin by thanking you, my colleagues and students, for sharing your comments and suggestions with me. The changes to the second edition reflect your feedback, and I think the second edition is a better assessment text for it. I hope you like what you see in this revision.

I would like to tell my contributors and reviewers how much I appreciate their participation in this project. They helped me identify and correct the errors that inevitably creep into a new book, but perhaps more important they allowed me to see through other eyes, showing me how to make the book even more useful to a greater range of readers. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Daniel Mason who again so generously made available his unequaled collection of heart, lung, and abdominal sounds for inclusion on the student CD. Being able to repeatedly listen to these sounds will enable nursing students to develop a skill that will make a significant difference in their care of patients. And to all my colleagues who provided the photographs that will greatly enhance students' understanding of the assessment findings, thank you.

For believing in my vision and for their continued support throughout this project I would like to acknowledge the staff at F.A. Davis, especially Lisa Deitch, Nursing Publisher. I would also like to thank William Welsh, Nursing Developmental Editor; Ilysa Richman, Nursing Project Editor; and Darlene Pedersen, Nursing Content Development Manager for their editorial expertise, their logistical support, and their guidance through the revision process. Thanks, too, to everyone in the Production Department who made the second edition work well and look great: Carolyn O'Brien, Art Director; Sam Rondinelli, Production Manager; and David Orzechowski, Managing Editor. And I would especially like to acknowledge the F.A. Davis sales force for not only promoting but also believing in this educational approach to assessment.

Finally, and most importantly, a special thank you to my family—Joe, Joey, Katie, and Patty—for their understanding and unending support.



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