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New Edition of Top Nursing Book Released

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— The newest edition of the nation's most popular health assessment textbook is now available from author Carolyn Jarvis of Illinois Wesleyan University.

The book, *Physical Examination and Health Assessment* helps prepare future nurses to assess patient problems. Now in its fifth edition, the text contains new additions, all geared to a generation weaned on the Internet.

"Technology is here, and I want to be on top of it," said Jarvis. "Students are so savvy that it makes sense to go this route." Along with expanding the accompanying CD and Web site information that were introduced in the fourth edition, a new companion book is available both in pocket form and for personal digital assistants (PDA). "The pocket companion fits perfectly in a lab coat, and a lot of nurses are now carrying pharmacology information on their BlackBerrys, so the electronic version would give them a reference through examinations," said Jarvis.

Also new is a series of 13 DVDs that focus on the body systems and head-to-toe examinations of adults and children. Jarvis wrote the script for the video and oversaw production. "I was there to make sure everyone had their examining hands in the right places," Jarvis said of the video shoots. Just like the video, Jarvis is involved in every aspect of producing and putting together the book including writing most of the nearly 900 pages of the book. She also oversaw the layout and design. "The photos have to appear on the printed page exactly where I say to avoid confusion," said Jarvis of photography taken by IWU Professor of Art Kevin Strandberg. "If I want students to be able to identify heart sounds, and tell you to put your stethoscope in a certain place, that photo has to be exactly where my words are."

Jarvis does what she can to keep the book relevant and accessible. "I want students to take the book to class and write in the margins, not keep it in their residence halls," she said. With each new edition, Jarvis decides what will be updated in the text. For the fifth edition, she added a section on functional assessment of the older adult. "The Baby Boomers are aging now, so it's a timely chapter on how to do an examination unique to an aging adult," she said. Jarvis said some older items were excluded from this issue. "There are some examination techniques that fall into disuse," said Jarvis, noting the use of a flashlight against the skin to detect sinus infection. "Nurses today rarely use that technique, so I removed that from the book."

First published in 1992, Jarvis began work on the latest edition of the textbook after completing her doctorate at the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2004. A graduate of the University of Iowa with her bachelor's degree in nursing, Jarvis followed with her master's degree in nursing from Loyola University in Chicago. Along with teaching for eight years at Illinois Wesleyan, Jarvis has taught at Rush University, the University of Missouri, Columbia and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

According to publisher Elsevier, the textbook has the major market share of nursing health assessment textbooks, and has remained one of the most popular textbooks in the nation with nursing students, including students of Jarvis, who teaches a course on health assessment at Illinois Wesleyan.

Jarvis attributes the book's long popularity to the conversational style of the text, and the straightforward explanations. "In the book, I'm directly talking to the reader. It's not 'the nurse does this.'" It's a descriptive language directed to you, the same I use in the classroom."

Just like her class, Jarvis fills the book with scenarios based on real-life situations, the same she faces as a nurse practitioner. "It's crucial to be practicing in the profession," said Jarvis. "Not only does it keep my skills active, but it validates the things I say in the classroom and in the text."

For Jarvis, the overall goal of the textbook is the goal of every nurse – to serve the patient. "Nurses are the only ones by the patient's bedside 24 hours a day," said Jarvis. "They have to have first-rate examination skills."



Carolyn Jarvis

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