

### *Acing the GI Board Exam: The Ultimate Crunch-Time Resource*

Brennan Spiegel. Thorofare, NJ: Slack Incorporated, 2009.  
ISBN: 978-1-55642-868-5.  
256 Pages. \$79.95.

*Acing the GI Board Exam*, by Brennan Spiegel, is a collection of high-yield facts and clinical pearls presented largely in the form of clinical vignettes. The book comprises 4 chapters. The first brief chapter provides information about which topics are emphasized on the GI boards and presents the author's view that mastering high-yield, yet often obscure, details can be part of a successful examination preparation strategy. The second chapter, which consists of 160 "tough stuff" vignettes, comprises the majority of the book. Each vignette contains a clinical

scenario, sometimes with color pathology or radiology images, with an accompanying question about diagnosis or treatment of the described condition. This is followed by a 1 to 2-page explanation that in brief summarizes the disorder and provides key bullet-points and buzzwords in a highlighted "Here's the Point!" section. There are some vignettes that are grouped to highlight related, frequently tested areas; for example, "GI/Dermatology Overlaps" and "HIV and Diarrhea". Chapter 3 comprises 100 clinical threshold values, such as "100 days = Divides acute versus chronic graft versus host disease" that the author suggests would be useful to memorize. Finally, the last chapter consists of 170 questions that test the reader's ability to guess a diagnosis from buzzwords.

The format of *Acing the GI Board Examination* has several benefits, which makes it enjoyable to read. The vignette style is similar to the

format of the GI Boards and is engaging and interactive. The manner of prose used in the book is simple and concise, with emphasis on the defining features of the described condition and the basics of treatment. However, the book is not comprehensive, focusing on rare conditions at the expense of everyday essentials. Furthermore, the third and fourth chapters are not particularly effective studying tools, containing no memorization aids or explanations. Therefore, the book could not be used as the primary text for board review, but instead as an adjunct to more exhaustive review books. Overall, reading *Acing the GI Board Exam* is an enjoyable way to learn about rare, but often tested, facts that might otherwise be overlooked.

**Anamika M. Chaudhuri, MD**  
Yale University School of Medicine  
Section of Digestive Diseases  
New Haven, CT

---

Funding: None.  
Conflict of Interest: None.