

Author predicts widespread acceptance of pocket-sized ultrasound machines

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Since the Civil War, the stethoscope has been a standard tool of the trade for physicians. Soon, the average doctor may be toting another valuable diagnostic tool: a pocket-sized ultrasound machine.

Alexander B. Levitov, MD, a professor of internal medicine at Eastern Virginia Medical School, believes that day is close. "I think in three to five years they will become commonplace," he predicts.

Dr. Levitov, a [critical care](#) physician and expert in the use of ultrasound, is prepared for that eventuality. He is co-author of a new book that guides physicians in use of the ultrasound machine. *Bedside Ultrasound in Clinical Medicine* was published in partnership with the American College of Physicians.

"This is the first all-inclusive guide to the use of bedside ultrasound in clinical medicine," says Jerry Nadler, MD, professor and chair of internal medicine at EVMS. "It will be a great resource for our [medical students](#), residents and other faculty."

Ultrasound use traditionally has been limited to examination of the heart and monitoring fetal development. But the machines — which peer inside the body and instantly provide valuable information — can be used to examine the entire body, literally from head to toe. And as the size and price of ultrasound machines continues to shrink, more and more physicians are using the technology as part of their daily practice.

"The bedside ultrasound is increasingly becoming a clinical tool that allows the interaction between doctor and patient to become much more sophisticated," says Dr. Levitov.

The portability of the smaller machines makes them a "great equalizer" in the provision of care, he says. "They can be taken into less affluent communities and it allows the practitioner to make a diagnosis on the spot."

Dr. Levitov's book, which he illustrated himself, has won widespread interest. At least one school has adopted the book, and the publisher recently had it translated into Italian.

Learning how to use ultrasound, Dr. Levitov says, "will be the defining skill for the next generation of physicians."

Provided by Eastern Virginia Medical School

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