

BOOKS

## A useful and educational book for all those involved with treatment of respiratory disease

*'Drugs for the treatment of respiratory disease', edited by Domenico Spina, Clive P. Page, William J. Metzger, Brian J. O'Connor. Pp xiii+599. Price £95. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2003. ISBN 0 521 77321 0.*

Primarily this book is concerned with the drug management of respiratory diseases. However an interesting feature is that it also covers the pathology and diagnosis of many respiratory disorders. Although the book is clearly divided into six parts, almost half of it concentrates on asthma and chronic obstructive airways disease and the medication to treat them. Since these are the most common respiratory diseases and the drugs are frequently prescribed in practice, this seems appropriate. Asthma and COPD are also areas where there is increased activity in the research of new drugs, and this is covered well in four of the chapters.

An established expert in the field of respiratory medicine writes each chapter of the book. About half of the chapters are written by authors from the United Kingdom and the remainder by North American, Italian and Japanese authors. Although, initially, I felt this might not reflect the treatment guidance offered by the British Thoracic Society, this was not the case, with the advice applicable to an international audience.

Other parts of the book concentrate on a number of topics. It was good to see a chapter on parenchymal lung diseases, such as idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, which is often overlooked. Parenchymal lung disease may be a confusing topic in respect of terminology and treatment and the book covers the topic in detail. Infectious diseases are also covered in the book with a part covering community acquired pneumonia, cystic fibrosis and chronic bronchial suppurative. Finally the book dedicates a section to each of the following: the drug treatment of pulmonary vascular disease, lung cancer and cough.

The book may have been improved by providing a concise summary and recommendations for treatment at the end of each chapter. This would have made the information clearer and quicker to find. The current layout makes it harder for the non-specialist to use. However, the publishers state this book will become an essential source of reference for respiratory clinicians and clinical pharmacologists and I believe that, in the field of respiratory medicine, they are correct in this assumption.

In summary, this book is clearly written and produced and unusually well illustrated. The book contains information on some of the basic research into the underlying mechanisms of respiratory medication and hence will appeal to those who are curious about such matters or who are pursuing or contemplating starting their own research into

this area. However, it will also be extremely useful to the more clinically oriented reader because it balances clinical knowledge with basic science. Although, perhaps, few readers will be interested in every chapter, all involved with the treatment of respiratory disease will find it useful and educational. This is not a book to be consulted for a quick "how to do it" guide to drug treatment for respiratory disease but is for those clinicians or pharmacists with an interest in the pharmacology of respiratory disease or with research or teaching interests in this field.

*Anna C. Murphy*

## Not an easy read but worth buying

*'Managing the patient-centered pharmacy' by Harry P. Hagel and John Rovers. Pp xvii+253. Price \$45. Washington DC: American Pharmaceutical Association; 2002. ISBN 1 58212 010 2.*

The future of pharmacy practice lies in the delivery of pharmaceutical care. Although committed to the philosophy, few practitioners actually succeed in developing professional patient care services. This book provides guidance on developing an infrastructure to support the practice of pharmaceutical care by the application of strategic planning and business concepts.

The book is structured into 10 chapters written by internationally recognised experts from America, Australia and Canada. The book raises four key questions: Where are you now? Where do you want to be? How will you reach your destination? How will you know you have arrived? Unfortunately by chapter 10 I knew I had not yet reached my destination.

Chapter 1 focused on the first question; it was well written and applicable to various health care systems and practice sites. Chapter 2 attempted to deal with the second question by adopting a case study approach, which simply did not work. Although I found the choice of names for the pharmacist (Eric Benaroud) and technician (Teresa Technique) irritating it was the use of the one case study throughout that limited the usefulness of this chapter. Chapters 3 to 7

answered the third question. Of particular note was chapter 3 on "interdisciplinary patient care" in which the author made an excellent case for a team approach to the delivery of pharmaceutical care — a partnership involving the patient, pharmacist, physician and other members of the health care team. The final question was answered in chapters 8 to 10, which successfully integrated patient outcomes, financial data and quality improvement systems.

The book is primarily aimed at managers and directors and is well indexed throughout. The chapters on "interdisciplinary patient care" and "managing patient outcome data" will be of great interest to practitioners and students. It is worth buying the book for these chapters alone.

Overall it was not an easy read, perhaps because it attempted to do too much. Hence I did not reach my final destination but learnt much on the journey — I recommend the book to you.

*Clare Mackie*

## Well written and useful for any pharmacist wishing to explore systematic reviews

*'Systematic reviews to support evidence-based medicine: how to review and apply findings of healthcare research', by Khalid S. Khan, Regina Kunz, Jos Kleijnen, Gerd Antes. Pp xi+136. Price £17.50. Oxford: Royal Society of Medicine Press Ltd; 2003. ISBN 1 85315 525 X.*

This book is aimed at health care professionals who either wish to understand the principles behind a good quality systematic review of the evidence base, or are about to begin undertaking their own systematic reviews. It is a practical book written by authors with experience of producing high quality systematic reviews.

Most pharmacists will know that a systematic review of trials sits at the top of the hierarchy of evidence, but many may not appreciate how a good systematic review is put together and what to look out for to determine whether a systematic review is robust.

The book describes what a systematic review is (eg, how meta-analysis links in) and the five key stages of constructing a systematic review (eg, how to identify, select and assess the quality of studies to include in a review).

Each section contains numerous helpful summary boxes and practical clinical examples to highlight key points. The book describes common terms such as intention-to-treat, Forest plots, funnel plots and relative risk number-needed-to-treat.

It describes sources of good quality systematic review (eg, Cochrane) and has a number of practical clinical case studies to work through at the end.

This book is well written and is a useful tool for any pharmacist wishing to explore systematic review further.

*Clare Jones*

### THIS WEEK'S REVIEWERS

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