

BOOKS

Comprehensive text that takes a fresh approach to teaching the subject of disease management

'Disease management', by Michael D. Randall and Karen E. Neil. Pp 512. Price £29.95. London: Pharmaceutical Press; 2004. ISBN 0 85369 523 7.

I found 'Disease management' to be a modern book, taking a fresh approach to "teaching" the subject of disease management and implying an active role for pharmacists in this health care area. The book works clearly within the context of UK health care. It uses the most recent reference texts, including governmental documents and National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines, to inform its applied content. Readers will generally be familiar with the references and, through the book, will be able to appreciate the relevance of these sources to their practice. I perceive this to be a positive feature, although have thought about whether this may contribute to the book becoming outdated faster if the authors do not manage to update the references in time.

In my opinion the structuring of the book is clear and useful — the background chapters are helpful in ensuring that issues of, for example, lifestyle, drug misuse, pregnancy and smoking are considered in the context of the overall management of diseases. The further introductory chapters on symptoms and signs as well as pharmacology (clearly presented) are extremely helpful in "one pack" with the rest of the book for quick reference to all forgotten. This, together with the choice of conditions, makes the book comprehensive with regards to the content.

The book provides an essence of each covered area in just the appropriate depth; it discusses the main points that can be further explored and studied by the reader. The connection to practice is made throughout the book.



The tables used within the book are well chosen with regards to the topic and content. The tables are clear and easy to use for immediate reference. The cases are illustrative and applicable. Cross-referencing is also useful, enabling a review of drugs and treatments in various contexts.

The language used is clear and professional, using but not abusing terminology and professional style.

I can see this book being used as a first port of call, a useful refresher and a reference book for practising pharmacists, particularly in primary care. I can also see the book being used by pharmacy students seeking to understand the essence of disease management and to identify main points for further study. Finally, I can see this book being used by nurses involved in disease management and prescribing.

Dita Engová

Valuable insight for those interested in explaining and understanding risk, and essential for researchers

'Risk, communication and health psychology', by Dianne C. Berry. Pp x+173. Price £19.99. Maidenhead: Open University Press; 2004. ISBN 0 335 21351 0.

Miscommunication of risk can have a dramatic impact on society. In 1995, when the Committee on Safety of Medicines warned that third generation oral contraceptive pills doubled the risk of thromboses compared with second generation pills, the consequence was a decrease in pill use, with an associated increased pregnancy and termination rate. This short book, part of a health psychology series, covers areas such as defining and explaining risk, emotional and cognitive issues around understanding risk, effectiveness of patient information leaflets, ethical issues and health information. Drug issues figure prominently in the text including short sections on medicines information, such as over-the-counter, herbal and homoeopathic medicines.

Also included is a section on quantifying and communicating the prevalence of side effects. Risk scales are discussed as an aid to putting risk in context. The visual depictions of risk are somewhat disappointing compared with the *BMJ* series (1993) and some of the text is short on examples and overly immersed in psychology discourse. The details of how to work out numbers needed to treat and odds ratios are not included.

However the majority of the book will be of interest to pharmacists who wish to delve further into understanding the challenging task of explaining risk to patients. This is an essential text for those undertaking research in this field.

Rob Shulman

Useful reference source but probably tries to do too many different things

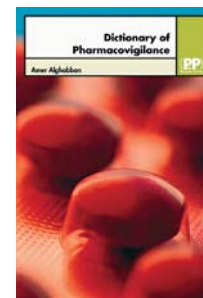
'Dictionary of pharmacovigilance', by Amer Alhabban. Pp ix+527. Price £39.95. London: Pharmaceutical Press; 2004. ISBN 0 85369 516 4.

Pharmacovigilance is a growing and expanding discipline with much associated and sometimes confusing terminology. This new dictionary provides definitions or descriptions, some with references, for over 3,100 abbreviations, terms and phrases relevant to the subject. It provides good coverage and explanations of day-to-day pharmacovigilance terms and there is a comprehensive listing of EU and Food and Drug Administration regulations, directives and terminology together with International Committee on Harmonisation documents. Some country-specific abbreviations and terms are also included. A number of adverse drug reaction (ADR) terms are also described but, since ADRs mimic a vast range of diseases, symptoms and signs, this is of relatively limited value because it is not a medical dictionary or textbook of medicine.

The numerous abbreviations and their meanings might be better separated from the other terms because, for most, there is no further explanation. Many are useful but some appear rather odd or perhaps company- or regulatory agency-specific, eg, CCS — Clinical Coding Specialist, HAR — Herbal Adverse Reaction, HL7 — Health Level 7, HSRC — Human Subjects Review Committee, and SRPF — Spontaneous Report Pregnancy Form. The size of the print is also small.

Overall, this is a useful reference source for anyone working in pharmacovigilance to have available and for the non-specialist it provides some good concise explanations with pointers to further reading. However, it probably tries to do too many different things, being a dictionary of pharmacovigilance terms, a dictionary of the more important ADRs and a list of abbreviations.

John C. C. Talbot



Dita Engová is lecturer in medicines management and medicines in health care course director, London South Bank University in association with the School of Pharmacy, University of London
Rob Shulman is an ICU pharmacist at University College London Hospitals and is studying for a doctorate in healthcare pharmacy at King's College London
John Talbot is director, Global Drug Safety, AstraZeneca R & D

Diary

Announcements of branch and regional meetings for the Diary column should reach *The Journal* by 1pm on the Tuesday before publication.

Branch programme cards are welcome at the beginning of the season, provided that branches subsequently notify *The Journal* in good time about any programme changes.

Correction

The price of the 'Dictionary of pharmacovigilance' is £65, not as stated.