

BOOKS

Practical, accessible resource for wound care products — but many deficiencies

Formulary of wound management products: a guide for healthcare staff, by David A. Morgan. Pp 175. Price £9.95. Surrey: Euromed Communications Ltd; 2004. ISBN 1 899015 54 X.

This book could be a useful tool for those health care staff who may be unfamiliar with the materials available for application to any specified wound. It provides some insight into those products commonly used to manage human wounds.

The inclusion of a skeletal veterinary section is to be welcomed as the management of animal wounds is an area which is rapidly becoming more significant, but its relevance to a publication specifically recommended for health care staff is debatable. Perhaps the name of the publication should be changed if this area of wound management is to be included as a regular feature.

The materials are listed alphabetically by product name with short descriptions of their composition and some indication is given to indicate the types of wounds for which their use would be appropriate. The inclusion or otherwise of the products in the Drug Tariff is also indicated. It is unfortunate, however, that reference is made on several occasions throughout the publication to “cotton wool”. This is a title which was officially amended to absorbent cotton some time ago.

It would be useful if there was some cross-referencing between the product descriptions and the later section entitled “The management of wounds/wound types”. These two sections currently stand as separate entities and some sort of link between them would improve and widen the use of the booklet. There is little consistency between the descriptions of the wound types — some are described in detail, eg, diabetic ulcers, and others not at all, eg, epithelialising wounds. The care of skin surrounding wounds is a whole area of expertise and the one line entry (p132) dealing with it should be removed. This information is not only superficial but could lead to a worsening of the wound being treated if inappropriately applied by inexperienced practitioners.

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The veterinary section is disappointing and needs significant amendment. There is much emphasis on the healing process for both small animal and equine wounds but little description of the rationale behind any products selected to manage these wounds. In addition, some of the information given within the small animal section is inaccurate or irrelevant, eg, Opsite spray being described as an antiseptic, and the inclusion of garlic juice (Dorwest herbs) when the rubric below the title then says there are no data available for the use of garlic on wounds and that pure garlic can cause skin burns. The Animalintex entry (p171) quotes “tragacanth” and not “tragacanth” as a constituent. There are no products described in the equine section, which is unfortunate, as there are numerous publications which describe materials used for the management of equine wounds. There are other references, whose inclusion would add a meaningful dimension to this section.

In conclusion, there is much to like about this publication. It aims to give easily accessible information in a practical way to those practitioners managing wounds. It is just unfortunate that there are so many omissions and deficiencies in this information that doubt is cast on the validity of the rest.

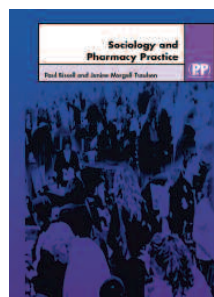
Sarah Cockbill

New insights into pharmacy practice from a sociological perspective

Sociology and pharmacy practice, by Paul Bissell and Janine Morgall Traulsen. Pp xv+226. Price £65. London: Pharmaceutical Press; 2005. ISBN 0 85369 613 6.

This book, adapted from a series of articles published in the *International Journal of Pharmacy Practice*, seeks to address the paucity of sociologically informed research undertaken within pharmacy. The authors outline a number of sociological theories and perspectives pertinent to health care and illustrate their potential to inform pharmacy practice in general and practice research in particular. To this end, the contributions of selected key theorists such as Marx, Parsons and Foucault are described, alongside reflections on the significance to pharmacy of factors such as feminism, ethnicity, risk and professional identity.

The book is well-written and up-to-date. Many of the theories described will be unfamiliar to pharmacists who have been educated according to bio-scientific principles. However, the authors have achieved an admirable balance between making the text intellectually challenging, yet readable.



My only minor criticism is that while most chapters usefully end with sections describing how a particular sociological perspective might be applied to pharmacy research, these are entitled “Relevance to pharmacy practice research”. In this, the authors seem to sell their project short. The entire book’s contents are highly pertinent to practice researchers, providing a resource for those seeking to explore aspects of practice and generate new insights by the application of sociological theorising to pharmacists’ professional activities. As such, I would recommend it to any such researcher seeking to include a sociological perspective in their studies.

Kevin Taylor

Detailed text aims to assist patients and health professionals in weight management

Best medicine: weight management, edited by George Kassianos. Pp xviii+98. Price £9.95. Oxfordshire: CSF Medical Communications Ltd; 2004. ISBN 1 905064 91 8.

The ‘Best medicine’ series claims it consists of “practical and authoritative guides providing detailed information for patients, carers and the general public”. Much of the content is drawn directly from the journal *Drugs in Context* and was originally intended for health care professionals. Rather than “dumbing down” the content the editor has included a glossary and explanatory patient notes to aid understanding.

The book needs to be studied in detail to appreciate its strengths, as some sections are highly technical and are not an easy read. It comprises a disease overview of obesity, comprehensive drug reviews of orlistat and sibutramine, and a section on improving practice. The drug reviews are informative and include comprehensive clinical trial evidence.

I would recommend this book to patients who like to have a detailed understanding of the medicines they take. This book could also be useful background reading for those whose jobs involve helping people with weight management problems, as some of them will be on drug therapy. I could see a place for recommending this book to any involved health care professionals, such as dietitians, practice nurses, general practitioners, and pharmacists, as well as possibly those such as slimming consultants and specialist gym staff.

With any recommendation to read it would come a warning not to attempt to understand everything in it.

The ‘Best medicine’ in the title reflects the fact that the emphasis of the book is on drugs used. The book is not a practical guide on “how to lose weight” and cannot be recommended as such.

Hilary Davies