



A number of topics are covered, most of them well. The writing is clear. The concept of practical guidelines is a good idea. The glossary explains the more technical terms in a user-friendly fashion. The authors suggest a number of concrete things that patients can do. A reading list is well put together and easily understood; annotations would have made it even more helpful.

My major criticism is that there are not enough tables and illustrations; these would break up the monotony of the text and could also help to explain things in a straightforward fashion.

There is a lot of good information in the book, but it takes persistence to find out enough details to get a good understanding of the disease. This is partly a result of its short length.

Overall, I recommend this book.

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Goodman & Gilman's The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics (CD-ROM)

9th ed. Edited by Joel G. Hardman, Lee E. Limbird, Perry B. Molinoff, Raymond W. Ruddon and Alfred Goodman Gilman. Illust. McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., Whitby, Ont. 1996. \$181.25. ISBN 0-07-864186-1

Overall rating: Excellent
Strengths: Comprehensive; easy, fast searching
Weaknesses: No drug interaction program; no section dedicated to pregnancy and lactation
Audience: All physicians

This stalwart and trusted old reference has been on my bookshelf for 35 years. Its release on CD-ROM is a welcome enhancement.

There is still the happy marriage of basic science and clinical utility, but now with the speed of a CD-ROM. It is current, too, even including a section on gene-based therapy. Also included are tables, graphs and diagrams.

I am a solo GP in a remote Yukon town. My hardware is a modest PC Pentium 160 with 16 MB RAM and a 4X CD-ROM drive. I used this CD daily for a month to test it in everyday practice.

My first priority is quick, pithy and current overviews on drugs that I might prescribe. This software delivers just that and more. The writing is clean and precise. A pleasurable plus is frequent spicy snippets of fascinating history: where the drugs were first found and how their usage has evolved.

When I searched "heart failure" I found a solid modern approach, summaries of the drug classes and references for current review articles. When I searched "thyroid" and "cholesterol" there was a cogent description of their relationship. When I searched "progesterone" and "intramuscular" and "contraception" many of my questions on this new (for Canada) indication were answered. When I searched "mefloquine" I received information as current as that of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

A bonus is 6 years of abstracts from 50 prestigious journals. Although they are fun to browse, it was cumbersome to find a specific abstract cited in the text. This is a minor annoyance, however.

Lacking on this CD-ROM is a drug interaction program. More and more patients, especially the elderly, are taking incredible cocktails of pills and potions. The combinations and permutations are fraught with much danger. Another addition could be a section on drugs during pregnancy and lactation. May the editors rise to

the challenge and add these features to a wonderful CD-ROM.

All in all, this is very useful software for the desk of any busy physician.

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Practical Minor Surgery (CD-ROM)

David Crawford and Chris Khoo. Overseas Publishers Association, Omni Media Associates, harwood academic publishers, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. 1996. US\$117. ISBN 90-5702-006-8

Overall rating: Good
Strengths: Attention to detail
Weaknesses: UK phraseology; video below average; complicated
Audience: Surgical interns and residents

This CD was designed to assist family doctors and surgeons-in-training to grasp the essentials of minor surgical procedures. The context is surgery as practised in England, but the procedures would be equally common to North America.

The substance of the CD is good and very detailed. It is a multimedia presentation with graphics, animation, video and sound; this can be almost too much at times. The authors present rules and regulations applicable to surgeons and hospitals, facilities required, equipment, anesthesia and excision of common lesions. Suture materials are discussed in detail, and wound closure methods are shown. Reference is made to proper wound care, appropriate dressings, postoperative follow-up and evaluation of results. There is even a quiz to see if you absorbed the information en route!

For those in surgical training this CD would undoubtedly be most helpful, providing one made al-