



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-



lowances for slight differences in nomenclature this side of the ocean. Some of the techniques shown on video unfortunately are often partially obscured and even out of focus, which is most frustrating. Nevertheless, following the advice and techniques, so colourfully demonstrated, would assist a young surgeon greatly in learning the essentials of minor surgery. For experienced surgeons however, there is little here that they wouldn't already know.

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Glaucoma: A Patient's Guide to the Disease

Graham E. Trope. 66 pp. University of Toronto Press. 1997. \$8.95. ISBN 0-8020-7847-8

Overall rating: Excellent
Strengths: Common questions answered clearly and with authority
Weaknesses: Discussion on antifibroblastic agents rather long, and their description "correctly" as anti-cancer drugs may cause unnecessary anxiety in patients
Audience: Glaucoma patients, ophthalmologists, ophthalmology residents, optometrists, family doctors, geriatricians, community nurses, pharmacists

The diagnosis of glaucoma raises a great many questions in the patient's mind.

In this booklet, Trope uses the novel idea of collecting the questions that he has been asked and using the answers to describe the disease, the testing required for diagnosis and the aims and practicalities of both topical and surgical therapy. All ophthalmologists will be familiar with these questions and may themselves have some to add.

The booklet is for patients, and I am sure they will find it helpful and informative. I also recommend it to ophthalmology residents as a guide to formulating their discussions with patients.

It should be available in all family practice, geriatric medicine and nursing training programs. Answers to questions directed at non-ophthalmologists may be found in this booklet, and this may avoid an unnecessary visit to the ophthalmologist's office or clinic.

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Take Care: A Practical Guide for Helping Elders

Ann Rhodes. 199 pp. HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., New York; HarperCollins Canada Ltd., Toronto. 1997. \$20. ISBN 0-00-638491-9

Overall rating: Good
Strengths: Well written; comprehensive without being daunting; simple format, easy to read
Weaknesses: None that is obvious. Price may be prohibitive to some
Audience: Physicians, caregivers and relatives of frail elders

This book has the distinct advantage of being "Canadian" and therefore of practical value to Canadian readers — without the need for "translation" from the US or European milieu. Ann Rhodes is a well-respected editor, columnist and freelance author. This is her third book on care of the elderly. She writes in a clear and sensitive style, which appeals to caregivers and care receivers alike.

The text works methodically through a wide range of pertinent subjects. The opening chapters address the attitudes of both potential

caregiver and receiver, then discuss the levels of care requirement and the attendant's ability to respond successfully to these demands. Roles and relationships within families and in the community are considered.

The short section on physical aging and a simplified functional assessment process are most valuable. Activity programming and communication hints are well covered, and information is provided on support groups and services. Advice on simple personal care routines is sensitively handled. The final chapter deals with palliative care and the medicolegal aspects of care provision.

Overall, I hope physicians who advise families in caring for dependent elders will read this volume and recommend it to them and to those who are considering their role in such situations.

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The Quintessential Canadian Anesthetist: Wesley Bourne A Retrospective on the Foundations of McGill Anesthesia

Joan C. Bevan, Maria A. Pacelli. *Fontanus Monograph Series*, no. 10. 138 pp. Illust. McGill University Libraries, Montreal. 1996. \$45. ISBN 0-7717-0485-2

Overall rating: Good
Strengths: Well researched; broad in scope but not overwhelmed with detail; both objective and personal
Weaknesses: Chronologically disjointed; rambling presentation
Audience: Anesthetists, historians, McGill alumni

As we approach the new millennium, we look back to find how we arrived at this point, and who