



## Best Evidence 2: Linking Medical Research to Practice

CD-ROM (Windows® or Macintosh® format). *ACP Journal Club* 1991–1997, *Evidence-Based Medicine* December 1995–1997. American College of Physicians, Philadelphia. 1998. Distributed in Canada by the CMA. \$107.95 (CMA members, \$70.95); institutions, \$142.95; for network prices call CMA Member Service Centre 888 855-2555.

**Overall rating:** Very good

### Strengths:

- Excellence in quality of content
- Uses an interface that is intuitive to those familiar with navigating Windows and the World Wide Web
- Effective index and text-word search strategies
- Excellent glossary on analytical terms
- Thought-provoking and insightful editorials on harnessing MEDLINE to practise evidence-based medicine

### Weaknesses:

- No hypertext linkages of references in the body of review articles
- No access to the complete articles that were reviewed
- Cannot chronologically access articles
- Does not fully exploit the CD-ROM medium (e.g., graphics, sounds, videos)

### Audience:

- Family practice, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, surgery, psychiatry and pediatrics; physicians interested in health economics and organizing medical educational programs

For those of us who want to practise evidence-based medicine but don't know where to start, *Best Evidence 2* may be an important tool to launch us on our quest. Essentially, it is a compilation of all articles and editorials in the *ACP Journal Club* and *Evidence-Based Medicine* journals from their inception to 1997. The chief editors of these 2 journals, Drs. David Sackett and Brian Haynes, are recognized champions of evidence-based medicine. Using stringent selection criteria, the editorial staff identified the best articles from 80 peer-reviewed medical journals in internal medicine, family practice, obstetrics and gynecology, surgery, psychiatry and pediatrics for review. These articles were summarized in abstract for-

mat, and their clinical significance to current practice are commented on by experts.

This CD-ROM offers several outstanding features for a modest price. Navigation with button bars and hypertext linkages is relatively effortless and intuitive for those comfortable with computers and the Internet. Conducting an index or text-word search among the 1000 citations is easy and effective. The glossary, which succinctly defines and discusses terms frequently used in statistical analysis of clinical papers, is a handy and effective reference. Examples include relative risk (RR), absolute reduction rate (ARR), numbers needed to treat (NNT), confidence intervals (CI) and odds ratios (OR). Also impressive is a series of well written and thoughtful editorials — “Beyond ACP Journal Club” — which discusses the use of MEDLINE to deal with problems in diagnosis, therapy, etiology and prognosis. Another series of editorials, “Transferring evidence from research into practice,” is equally insightful and well worth reading.

*Best Evidence 2* does have several weaknesses, although they do not significantly diminish its value or hamper its effectiveness. The *ACP Journal Club* and *Evidence-Based Medicine* issues cannot be accessed chronologically; readers cannot select an issue or article by date. Pertaining to the review articles, references cited in the text are not hyperlinked to the reference section. Furthermore, the full text of the articles reviewed is not available. Since the full text of both *Annals of Internal Medicine* and *British Medical Journal* articles is now accessible via the Internet, a connection from the CD-ROM to the Internet for access to cited articles in these 2 journals would be a good start. There is a conspicuous absence of radio-

graphs, educational videos, graphs or other visual aides; these would add clarity and dynamism to the text. Reviewing and abstracting articles from multimedia journals would bring out the full potential of the CD-ROM medium.

Ultimately, the editors deliver what they promise: *Best Evidence 2* summarizes the best of the literature and puts the evidence into clinical context. For those without a subscription to *ACP Journal Club* or *Evidence-Based Medicine*, this CD-ROM is a valuable investment that provides quality information for a reasonable price. For those who do, it should still be considered for its searching and indexing capability and its excellent glossary.

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## Books and other media received

### Livres et autres documents reçus

#### Ethics

**The Biotech Century: Harnessing the Gene and Remaking the World.** J. Rifkin. 288 pp. Tarcher/Putnam. 1998. \$33.95. ISBN 0-87477-909-X

#### Neurology

**Clinical Neurology: Essential Concepts.** S.J. Ellis. 197 pp. Illust. Butterworth-Heinemann. 1998. US\$40. ISBN 0-7506-3343-3

#### Rheumatology

**Osteoarthritis.** Edited by K.D. Brandt, M. Doherty, L.S. Lohmander. 598 pp. Illust. Oxford U Pr. 1998. \$241.95. ISBN 0-19-262735-X