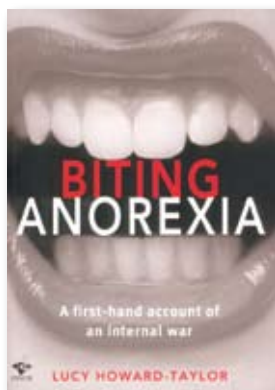


**Biting Anorexia: A first-hand account of an internal war**

Lucy Howard-Taylor

Finch Publishing Pty Ltd, 2008

ISBN 978 1 8764 5192 9, \$24.95



■ **Anorexia is a horribly complicated, difficult to understand illness. Lucy Howard-Taylor's 'Biting Anorexia: A first-hand account of an internal war' breaks down common stereotypes about the disease, and reveals the psychological torment that it involves.**

Howard-Taylor is a high achieving perfectionist who suffers with anorexia. In openly divulging her self talk and other jottings, the author takes the reader through the onset of her illness, to the 'brain paralysing' darkness of anorexia and depression and into a prolonged grey zone of recovery. The author emphasises that the main battle is within; to embrace life once again, then continue on a tortuous recovery process. The author writes, 'I'm constantly cranking open that little trapdoor to anorexia... creaking it closed again with all the energy I have'.

The author has moved on from the depths of her experience with anorexia, and this book closes with her motivational message for fellow anorectics. This book is an easy read and could be recommended to families attempting to understand the life threatening demise of a loved one with anorexia. It offers a highly personal experience of the illness and may help anyone involved with anorexia to better comprehend a sufferer's thoughts, obsessions, compulsions, emotions and needs.

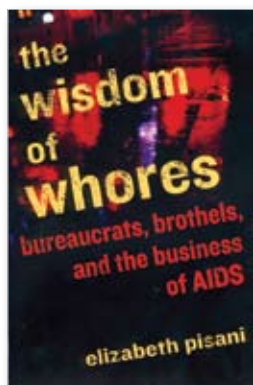
Sara Cameron  
Port Augusta, SA

**The wisdom of whores: bureaucrats, brothels and the business of AIDS**

Elizabeth Pisani

Great Britain: Granta Books, 2008

ISBN 978 1 84708 024 0, \$35.00



■ **My engagement with this book was cemented well before finishing the preface. Pisani quickly establishes that you're in for an amusing, instructive read.**

If you've ever wondered how to impart public health concepts to students in an entertaining way, here's the answer. Concepts such as sensitivity/specificity and sampling error are brought to life through memorable, often hilarious anecdotes. Clever 'sound bites' around frustrations in health delivery pepper the text: 'We were collecting more and more really good information, and then not acting on it'. Under the gloss is an insightful treatise on public health practice, relevant beyond HIV alone. The consistent message is that AIDS prevention programs should be based on fact, not ideology.

The book opens the 'honesty box' on pitfalls of medical research in the tropics; this will resonate with anyone who has worked in similar environments. The author tackles highly contentious ideas with gusto including the potential public health disadvantage of antiretroviral treatment as well as the benefits of mandatory HIV testing. Pisani also presents data to illustrate that if couples in Thailand were to have more premarital sex, men would be less likely to use sex workers and the HIV rate would therefore decline.

Pisani is a British epidemiologist with a journalist background – perfect credentials for deconstructing the world of HIV program funding and implementation. The text is simultaneously evidence based and a page turner. The chapter 'articles of faith' made me laugh out loud but exposes the tragic damage done to HIV prevention programs hijacked by American Christian fundamentalism.

The author writes of her subject matter convincingly and is as critical of herself as of everyone else. Pisani shatters the 'sacred cows' of HIV public policy and details universal stupidities in health funding (especially donor aid). Ultimately the book is a call to action. I hope it will be read widely by people who can make a difference.

Anna Ralph  
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**Murtagh's Patient Education  
5th edition**

John Murtagh

McGraw Hill Australia Pty Ltd, 2008

ISBN 978 0 070158 993, \$72.00

**John Murtagh's practice tips,  
5th edition**

John Murtagh

McGraw Hill Australia Pty Ltd, 2008

ISBN 978 0 070158 986, \$72.00



■ **Most of us will be familiar with John Murtagh's patient education sheets. Patient education is now recognised as a critical part of health care and patients look to their GP for reliable information. These information sheets are necessarily fairly generic in what they say, but will often be a valuable aid in the patient education process.**

Appropriately the patient education sheets are all limited to one page and contain a great collection of non-pharmacological tips on over 300 topics. The line drawings are clear and helpful.

I do have concerns however, that some of the topics covered may not be supported by evidence, eg. antibacterial soaps are recommended for impetigo. However, the collection remains very valuable, particularly in electronic form where topics can be modified for accuracy and appropriateness. Reading the book reminds me of all the extra patient information handouts I could be using.

'John Murtagh's practice tips' is the kind of book that I love to look through to see how many new tricks of the trade Murtagh has found. The collection in 'Practice Tips' is now expansive, with around 300 topics concisely written into 240 pages. These are grouped into 18 sections including: injection techniques, skin surgery, foreign bodies, nail problems, a large section on spinal manipulation techniques, dental, ENT, eyes, and dealing with children. It is not an exhaustive collection, but most GPs are sure to find some good ideas here.

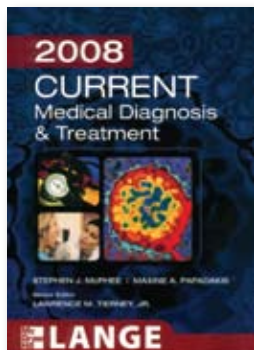
The author does not claim these tips to be evidence based health care. In some topics quantitative claims of effectiveness could be supported by footnotes which would greatly improve this aspect of the book. Many of the techniques in the book should be compared with properly designed trials. Here lies a set of challenges to anyone looking for great research topics. Overall it is recommended.

Dan Ewald  
Lennox Head, NSW

**Lange: 2008 Current Medical  
Diagnosis & Treatment**Stephen J McPhee, Maxine A  
Papadakis, Lawrence M Tierney Jr,  
editors

McGraw-Hill Australia Pty Ltd, 2008

ISBN 978 0 07 149430 4, \$110.00



■ **Having found other titles in Lange's 'Current Diagnosis & Treatment' series laboriously detailed and dry, I was not feeling positive when asked to review this book. However, I was pleasantly surprised to find that 'Current Medical Diagnosis & Treatment' was a significant improvement from previous Lange texts.**

The authors cover a comprehensive syllabus in internal medicine. The information is limited to the most pertinent aspects of diagnosis and treatment and provides the 'right dose' of information for the generalist. Most of the information is aimed at the level of a general physician, so it's probably more than what's required for every day general practice. This book will make a good resource for the GP to refresh and update on less commonly encountered diseases which may present to general practice.

The layout of the text is in chapter format by system based topic. It is fairly user friendly and easy to navigate, but there are not enough diagrams and illustrations to break up the bulky blocks of text.

There is a strong emphasis on infectious diseases. A chapter devoted to disease prevention and health promotion provides some primary care balance.

This book is a good reference text for the GP's bookshelf. However, like all print version medical texts, it has a limited shelf life due to the nature of rapidly evolving medical knowledge. Lange releases a yearly edition but it would be more worthwhile to subscribe to the online version ([www.AccessMedicine.com](http://www.AccessMedicine.com)). The online version has the added benefits of continual updates, online only chapters, rich media gallery and an integrated drugs database.

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