

Mosby's Handbook of Herbs and Natural Supplements 3rd edition

Linda Skidmore-Roth

Sydney: Elsevier Mosby, 2005

ISBN 0323037062, \$69.95



This is a book I highly recommend for health practitioners. It's a small handbook making it easy for storage and travel. It includes a description of almost every herb known to western countries, particularly Australia, and commonly used complementary medicines (CM) such as glutamine and glucosamine. It does not cover some areas of CM such as nutrients (vitamin and mineral supplements).

When describing the herbs or medicines the following format is generally used in most cases: scientific names, other common names, origin, uses (reported and investigational), product availability, dosages, routes (for adult and children), precautionary information and contraindications, potential drug/food/herb/laboratory interactions, general considerations with use, pharmacology

pharmacokinetics and actions. While a number of references are cited, they are generally limited. This is perhaps its biggest flaw. For example, in the case of glucosamine, there is a systematic review published in Cochrane earlier in 2005 that is not cited. Nevertheless, the information included is reliable and mostly correct.

The appendices also include useful information for the GP. Unfortunately, some sections include a list of resources that are mostly American and European CM programs and a list of American Association of Poison Control Centres. The most useful appendices include an extensive list of drug-herb interactions, dosage guidelines for paediatric herbal use, and a section on herbal safety including a list of herbs considered poisonous.

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Healthcare Scenarios in Developmental Disability Medicine

Centre for Developmental Disability and Health

Victoria: Centre for Developmental Disability and Health, 2005 Available from www.cddh.monash.org



Many readers will approach this CD-ROM with a sense of foreboding: is it going to scold me for not knowing much about people who are disabled? The good news is that the authors present really useful information in a way that is neither condescending nor patronising. Instead, they introduce the user to four adults with disabilities in a respectful, matter of fact way that seeks to neither glamorise nor lionise their lives. The result is a useful, practical CD-ROM that contains plenty of information for users.

The authors state at the outset that an aim of the disk is to challenge health practitioners' attitudes toward people with disabilities. As they point out, negative attitudes are an important barrier to overcome if insufficient knowledge or inadequate skills are to be properly addressed. So much the better then, that the authors make good use of multimedia to allow us to see and hear people with disabilities actually telling us what they really think about our health care. They do this with humour and good grace. Never again will I ask a patient if they have 'passed a stool' when they

needed me to ask if they've 'had a poo'. Just looking at a bar-stool now makes me wince.

The disk is packed with useful information and practical tips for the self directed learner, although some of the navigation takes a little getting used to. The video clips would make excellent teaching resources and there is a sensible balance between presenting information on each screen or offering side menus for greater depth of exploration. The resources folder contains some practical tools for immediate application in your clinical setting. The disk's self assessment tool is hampered by the lack of keyword text recognition but serves its purpose of prompting reflection.

'Healthcare scenarios in developmental disability medicine' is an important step forward in the medical care of people with disabilities. It deserves a place in any educational resource centre for health professionals of all levels.

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