

**Journeys with the Black Dog:  
Inspirational stories of bringing  
depression to heel**

Tessa Wigney, Kerrie Evers, Gordon Parker, editors

Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007  
ISBN 978 1 74175 264 9, \$24.95



■ **Providing a voice for people experiencing depression is a particular strength of the Black Dog Institute. Their publication, Journeys with the Black Dog, is an excellent example of this work. This book is a collection of narratives about depression, collated from the writing of people with mood disorders, and their family and friends.**

This book focuses on recovery from depression, yet does not shirk from some of the darker, more tragic narratives. These narratives are particularly helpful for the practising GP, as they capture so much more of the 'profoundly lonely, disabling and utterly subjective experience' than can ever hope to be achieved by an assessment based on a checklist of depressive symptoms. For our patients experiencing depressive symptoms, reading such narratives may also hope to clarify for them the difference between 'normal' sadness and the type of emotional distress that might benefit from seeking professional help.

This book has many moving examples of how hard the journey can be, and conversely how simple some of the strategies turn out to be for people who have recovered or have learned to bring 'depression to heel'. An especially moving section is the chapter on 'travelling companions' where family and friends of people with depression share their stories of helping loved ones on the journey to recovery.

This book is highly recommended for GPs and can be passed on to selected patients who seek a greater understanding of the lived experience of depression and wish to explore some real life solutions to recovery. For those who do not buy the book, consider at least adding [www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au) to your browser, as a useful resource for GPs and patients.

Caroline Johnson  
Carlton, Vic

**Toxicology Handbook**

Lindsay Murray, Frank Daly, Mark Little, Mike Cadogan

Churchill Livingstone Elsevier, 2006  
ISBN 13 978 0 7295 3789 6, \$69.95



■ **This book begins well with two strong chapters on general matters but ultimately fails because of weak editing, inexplicable exclusions and wasteful minutiae and repetition. There is section after detailed section on an eclectic list of drugs, some the authors tell us are not even available in Australia or New Zealand. There are other sections on bites and stings from animals, some of which aren't actually venomous. Yet tick envenomation, a scourge in eastern Australia and for which there is specific antivenom, is not included.**

An opportunity to explore issues of national public health importance in toxicology such as solvent sniffing is ignored. So is discussion of any legal or mental health issues that may implicate self harming patients or users of proscribed medication. A book of this nature demands the vernacular. Hence a dictionary of 'street names' of these drugs and other relevant terms would be invaluable.

Botanical and herbal poisonings are not covered. The major toxidromes are not identified as such. There is no discussion about dangerous goods and their transport. An explanation of the United Nations Number and the HazChem Code, attached by law as an emergency information panel to all relevant vehicles, would be of benefit. So would links to relevant toxicology websites.

These are disappointing omissions from a book which proclaims to be a portable poisonings resource for all emergency practitioners. Sadly there are others. The deficiencies may reflect the limited view allowed the authors from their two hospitals in Perth, Western Australia, which more rigorous research and tighter editorial control would have rectified.

Peter Thomas  
Brisbane, Qld