

Not So Straight

Family Planning
Victoria

Australia: Family
Planning Victoria,
2010

resources@fpv.org.au,
\$22.00

The health and wellbeing of same-sex attracted young people is of the utmost relevance to healthcare professionals.

This engaging DVD provides a valuable insight into the issues facing same-sex attracted young people living in Victoria. Sexual identity, homophobia and acceptance, moving out of home, going out, virtual space, rural isolation, living with HIV, relationships and the future are all discussed from the personal experiences of around 10 young people from the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) community.

The main feature of 60 minutes duration is accompanied by eight bonus scenes featuring



interviews with professionals providing services to GLBTI youth. These interviews are with key people from: Family Planning's youth service (The Action Centre); the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard; Joy 94.9 (a GLBTI specialist radio station); Melbourne Queer Film Festival (Festival Director); the Minus 18 club and ALSO (Alternative Lifestyles Society); Rainbow Network Victoria; and Victoria Police's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Office (GLLO, pronounced as 'glow').

I found this DVD gave an insight into the world of GLBTI youth, the issues they face and the things that have helped and hindered them along the way. It is very powerful having the voices of young people themselves as the main feature of this documentary and a balance between the challenges and positives celebrating who they are now and their aspirations for the future.

The bonus features were very useful as they defined many valuable services that exist in Victoria (and sometimes in other states) to assist young people in their life journey and to connect them with other young people in the GLBTI community. The interviews were conducted by young people asking very pertinent questions about what each

service offers, how to access it, and what will happen when a young person accessed it. There were also vox pops with youth attending films during the Melbourne Queer Film Festival and the entertainment hosted by the Minus 18 club.

For a GP, this DVD would be a useful resource for any of the young people they see who are same-sex attracted and feeling isolated socially and emotionally or who may want more information about how others have tackled challenging issues. It is also helpful to note the services available to young people and older people in the GLBTI community.

I would really like to see a sequel DVD aimed at training health professionals in how to be GLBTI youth friendly, modelling communication skills and providing advice on how to broach important physical and mental health issues and enquiring about sexual identity in a culturally sensitive way.

I recommend this DVD for young people and for doctors who want to be informed about the issues faced by the GLBTI youth and the services available to support them.

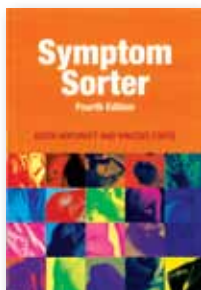
Lena Sanci
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Symptom Sorter

Keith Hopcroft
Vincent Forte

United Kingdom:
Radcliffe Publishing,
2010

ISBN 13 978 1846 1945 35,
\$47.50



'Symptom Sorter' is a book for GPs, by GPs. It is a tool designed to assist the primary care practitioner in making sense of the symptom based presentations of patients who consult. The book analyses 100 or so symptoms commonly encountered in general practice. Each symptom is 'sorted' in fewer than three pages under the following headings:

GP overview – three or four lines which define the symptom and its frequency of presentation in general practice.

Differential diagnosis – presented using a 'common things occur commonly' approach.

Possible investigations – to help in elucidating the symptom – categorised according to the

likelihood of a particular investigation being necessary.

Top tips – handy hints, born of years of the authors' general practice experience, 'unashamedly anecdotal rather than evidence based' to help in the management of each symptom.

Red flags – aspects of presentation that suggest significant pathology.

The symptoms are grouped into 19 sections, arranged alphabetically according to body system and anatomy. There is a well cross referenced index which makes symptom searching quick and easy. This is the fourth edition of the book in 11 years, a fact attesting to its popularity and currency. Although written from a United Kingdom primary care perspective, its content is entirely relevant to Australian general practice.

This book is a tool to have on your desk. Better still, it is a tool to have on your computer desktop (hint to publisher!). It is GP friendly in every sense – thorough, yet concise; comprehensive, yet easily accessed; scientific, yet sensible. I found the book easy to use, and its layout clear. Although the 'red flags' sections often contain management tips

rather than red flags in the generally understood sense of the term, these were usually interesting and helpful enough to forgive the taxonomic licence. As a GP, this book will help plug the holes in my aging brain and help me to reflect on my own experience as a diagnostician. As a GP supervisor, this book will help me impress my registrar when I am asked for advice about bad breath, a limping child or hallucinations! Buying a copy for my registrar might be even more impressive!

The existence of this book prompts the question: Is general practice merely the sorting of symptoms? Is a painting by Albert Namatjira merely an arrangement of shapes and colours? Is a song sung by Joan Sutherland merely the vocal projection of musical notation? This book enriches general practice by refining its shapes, colours and notation. It is the artistry of the individual practitioner that helps create successful outcomes for patients.

Stephen Sylvester
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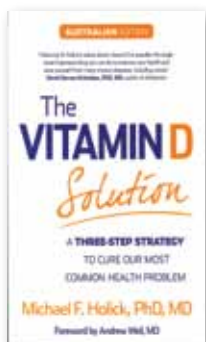
The Vitamin D Solution

Michael F Holick

Australia: Scribe Publications Pty Ltd, 2010

ISBN 978 1921 640 520, \$35.00

Michael Holick is a world renowned expert in the field of vitamin D and his zeal and enthusiasm for this topic overflows into his book 'The Vitamin D Solution'. The Australian edition has been given a local relevance, and it is an easy (if not essential) read for both lay people and healthcare workers alike. My own interest in the subject started whilst working in the Middle East, where vitamin D deficiency is endemic due to a combination of traditional dress and a traditional diet that is lacking vitamin D – and this is in a region where the local weather forecasters struggle to find



enough adjectives to describe just how sunny the weather will be tomorrow. This interest has continued since moving to South Australia where we are finding vitamin D deficiency is also extremely common.

The first section of the book describes the normal biochemistry and physiology of vitamin D metabolism and goes on to discuss the physical and mental health benefits of having adequate vitamin D circulating, as well as the biopsychosocial advantages of regular exposure to light – particularly sunlight – some of which do not seem to be mediated through the action of vitamin D.

The second section of the book discusses the 'solution' – this is nothing earth shattering, but is likely to cause eyebrows to rise and hairs to stand on end amongst the sun phobic dermatologists, legislators and sunscreen manufacturers. Simply put, regular, carefully controlled exposure of the skin below the neck to sunlight could solve many physical and mental health symptoms amongst

our patients. This book includes tables to guide the reader as to how much sun exposure is recommended at various latitudes within Australia and New Zealand. Holick includes an extensive bibliography of articles from mainstream peer reviewed medical journals to support his own ideas and research. The author feels that the enormous health benefits of regular, controlled sun exposure far outweigh the small increase in nonmelanoma skin cancers that may arise. His ideas are not popular with the big pharmaceutical industries, of course, as they have not yet found a way to charge us for sunlight.

I have two criticisms of the book – Holick tends to repeat himself at times and, secondly, the editors of the Australian edition failed to convert the units for vitamin D that are quoted from the United States units (ng/ml) to those the rest of the world use (nmol/L). You will need to multiply by a factor of 2.5.

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Good Medical Practice Professionalism, Ethics and Law

Kerry J Breen

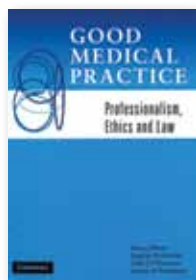
Stephen M Cordner

Colin JH Thomson

Vernon D Plueckhahn

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010

ISBN 978 0521 18341 3, \$75.00



What are the laws surrounding consent of minors? What is the National Health and Medical Research Council and what does it do? When is withdrawing or withholding treatment appropriate? What does an osteopath do and what training do they have? What can you expect if you are asked to appear as a medical witness in a court of law?

There is so much more to being a doctor than medicine. As a medical educator, I have observed that doctors in training and international medical graduates struggle far more with the nonmedical aspects of the profession than with clinical knowledge.

There is a great need for user friendly Australian textbooks which cover these topics in sufficient but not exhaustive detail. Good Medical Practice fits the bill perfectly. It covers an enormous range of relevant topics, from the ethical responsibilities of medical students to practice management issues, to doctors' health, to the legal requirements surrounding death and dying. It does not shy away from complex and controversial subjects such as abortion, euthanasia, allocation of resources, and sexual misconduct. The four authors are all very well respected and experienced Australian practitioners with extensive teaching and medicolegal experience.

At 424 pages, this book does not set out to cover each topic comprehensively, but provides an excellent starting point for anyone looking for information on medical professionalism, law and ethics. It is well referenced and suggested further reading on each topic is provided. Its strength lies in its accessibility. It brings together an enormous amount of information relevant to Australian

medical practice in a single, easy to read, user friendly text.

This book is an ideal core textbook for medical students, doctors in training and international medical graduates, and much would be gained from their reading it from cover to cover. It would be very helpful for those studying for The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Fellowship exam. The chapter on the Australian health system would be particularly valuable for those who've recently arrived from overseas. It is also a useful text for established, experienced doctors who wish to brush up on these important aspects of medical practice and/or use the book as a convenient initial reference for issues that arise in their practice. This is a textbook that I will be recommending to my general practice registrars, and I plan to use content from the book in my teaching sessions. A top resource in every respect – I give it a five star rating!

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