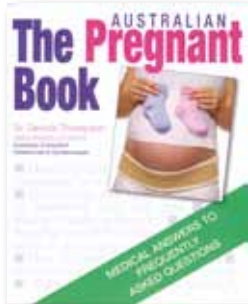


**The Australian Pregnant Book**

Derrick Thompson

Australia: Wenderbella Press, 2009

ISBN 978 098 0551 402, \$49.95



■ This is a well structured book, divided into six sections which are laid out in chronological order from 'preparing for pregnancy' through to 'the postnatal period'. This is followed by an excellent 'FAQ's' section which addresses all the niggling questions women have during their pregnancy, particularly their first. Such questions include: 'What medications are safe to use?' and 'Can I use hair dye/fake tan?' As well, there are plenty of helpful dietary/alcohol and exercise tips. There is also a comprehensive glossary to help interpret all the medical terms the doctor or midwife may use.

There are excellent visual aids throughout the book. These are a combination of medical illustrations, ultrasound and laparoscopy images and growth charts.

This is not a book that I would recommend for every woman preparing for pregnancy. It mainly deals with the 'medical' aspects of pregnancy and would be too technical and detailed for the majority of women. It also fails to provide a week-by-week fetal development guide, which most other pregnancy books do include, and which, in my experience, pregnant women most look forward to reading and anticipating each next stage in their baby's development. I would however, recommend this book to those women with higher anxiety levels regarding their pregnancy. For example, women who have suffered previous miscarriage, pregnancy or delivery complications, or those who have conceived via in vitro fertilisation. For this group of women, the detailed medical information would likely relieve their anxieties by addressing their questions and fears.

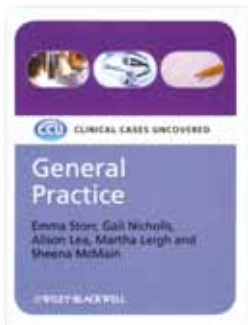
Kirsten Hamblen  
Melton, Vic

**General Practice – Clinical Cases Uncovered**

Emma Storr, Gail Nicholls, Alison Lea, Martha Leigh, Sheena McMain

United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008

ISBN 978 1 40516 1404, \$57.95



■ This book is part of a United Kingdom based series of case presentations in different specialities. The first part provides a brief background to general practice, particularly in the UK.

The majority of the book is 36 very believable presentations to general practice, such as the red eye, 'funny turns', tiredness and panic attacks. Each case starts with a brief vignette, then a trigger question such as 'What should you do first?' and the case unfolding with further information and questions. These questions focus on key elements of the presentation and subsequent consultation. The cases have the real twists of general practice with frustrated relatives and patients refusing hospitalisation. Red flags or treatment guidelines are provided. There is then a case review and key points summary.

The final section of the book has 30 multiple choice questions, 30 extended matching questions and 10 short answer questions with answers and references back to the cases.

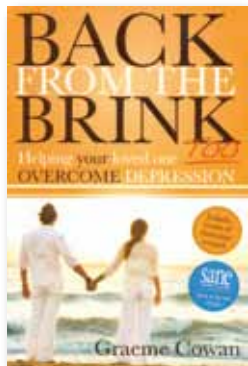
One problem for the Australian reader is the UK referencing and information. For example, the asthma case refers to recommended doses of ventolin in the British National Formulary, which differs from those in the Australian Asthma Management Handbook. The principles of assessment and the issues to manage in the consultation are similar. This type of problem occurs in many cases, but is usually minor and references are clearly identified, so the Australian reader wanting the 'correct' answer can check local guidelines. Following the advice in the book (in the case of asthma: 10 rather than 12 puffs of ventolin via a spacer) would still provide safe care.

This book will appeal to senior medical students, prevocational general practice placement program doctors, general practice registrars and educators. However, those using it for exam preparation also need to use local references and consider the Australian context when assessing the answers to the questions posed.

Carolyn O'Shea  
Melbourne, Vic

**Back from the Brink Too**  
**Helping your loved one**  
**overcome depression**

Graeme Cowan  
 Gordon NSW, Bird In Hand  
 Media, 2009  
 ISBN 978 0980 3393 14, \$33.00



■ **'Back from the Brink Too' is an excellent book which I will recommend to carers of patients suffering from depression. Written by Graeme Cowan, who himself has suffered from severe depression, it articulates a profound understanding of the impact on carers, and provides well researched information and advice.**

The best advocate for depressed patients is their carer, be they the partner, parent or other family member or friend. The burden is considerable and this book validates the demands placed upon them. It empowers the carer by acknowledging the impact of the depression upon them, and by educating them it enables more successful outcomes. The reader should feel optimistic with improved knowledge and skills.

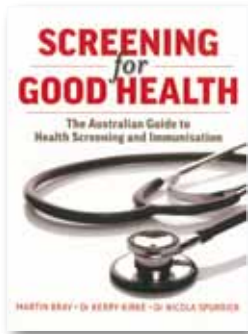
This book is easily understood with clear language, and is well set out to enable easy access to information. One of the most important aspects of the book is encouraging nurturing of the carer, including advice to ensure that withdrawal from social events and isolation, and lessening of emotional support in relationships is avoided, or at least minimised. Tips to aid better communication with the depressed patient, as well as advice in crisis situations where suicide may be an option, and valuable resources at the end of the book all add to the value of Cowan's book.

I would encourage GPs to read and recommend this book to all their patients suffering from depression, and their carers, to optimise their recovery from depression.

Delma Mullins  
 Muswellbrook, NSW

**Screening for Good Health**  
**The Australian Guide to Health**  
**Screening and Immunisation**

Martin Bray, Kerry Kirke,  
 Nicola Spurrier  
 Carlton, Australia, Melbourne  
 University Press, 2009  
 ISBN 978 05228 55982, \$49.99



■ **The provision of information to patients about health and health care is important if helping them to be more actively involved in shared decision making. One area which is particularly difficult is the area of screening and preventive medicine, where the issues are complex involving estimation of probabilities and balancing of risks and benefits.**

'Screening for Good Health' is an ambitious attempt to address this need. To their credit, the authors have attempted to do so in a comprehensive, systematic and unbiased way. However there are a number of problems:

The methodology for the assessments is not well described (although there are criteria for screening tests). This book tends to err on the side of recommending the screening test. In discussing screening tests it tends to underplay the adverse effects of screening such as the complications of surgery following a true or false positive screening test. Furthermore, it does not always do justice to the alternative to screening – usual care. An example is testicular cancer where the efficacy of treatment without screening is very high.

The recommendations and star rating are confusing. Screening that is not recommended by the authors is still given two stars out of five. In many cases, there is insufficient information about who should be screened (especially what at risk groups should or should not be screened) and the frequency of screening.

There are some important omissions such as depression and lifestyle risk factors. There are important omissions and conflicts with current recommendations in The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' 'red book'. These include screening for diabetes, lung, prostate and testicular cancer.

This is disappointing and enough to prevent me from recommending this book to my patients.

Mark F Harris  
 Sydney, NSW