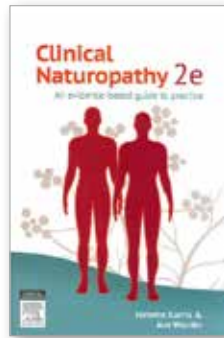


Clinical Naturopathy 2e – An evidence-based guide to practice

Jerome Sarris, Jon Wardle

Australia: Elsevier, Churchill
Livingstone, 2014
ISBN 9780729541732



Hippocrates said 'Natural forces within us are the true healers of disease'. This remark lays a profound basis for understanding the nature of health and disease. However, modern medicine, with its emphasis on technological advances and pharmaceutical interventions, has been criticised for being at risk of losing these quintessential and philosophical underpinnings. It could be said that modern medicine focuses more on chronic disease management rather than optimisation of health and wellbeing in the individual.

Clinical Naturopathy is a user-friendly textbook examining the growing evidence base for treatments such as nutritional and herbal interventions, and the science behind the interconnectedness of the whole being. Gaining an understanding and appreciation of these interconnections could be the catalyst for a profound shift in understanding of healing principles

in general, as Hippocrates espoused thousands of years ago.

I found the examination of the holistic and naturalistic model of healthcare in this book so useful. Consideration of the biochemical basis of cellular and systems health, as well as the psychological and environmental influences at play can give readers and practitioners a more expanded

approach to their understanding of health, illness and the person who has the illness.

Some chapters of the book are illness-based (eg irritable bowel syndrome, endometriosis) and others look at a broader paradigm (eg immune insufficiency, paediatrics). In the disease-oriented chapters, the authors look at the research for the conventional and naturopathic approaches. However, the weight of the evidence base is for the naturopathic approach as opposed to the conventional – the aim seems to be to show the research applicable to the natural interventions rather than a comparison of the two.

The book does not encompass all areas of clinical medicine. Some chapters focus on

illnesses for which Western medicine provides only symptomatic relief, such as irritable bowel syndrome, dysmenorrhea and fibromyalgia. Others provide evidence for nutritional and less known lifestyle interventions for more complex conditions, such as cancer, cognitive impairment and asthma.

There are separate chapters on anxiety, depression, insomnia, stress, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and bipolar disorder, which may provide the practitioner with an increased appreciation for intervention.

Some handy appendices showcase herb/nutrient and drug/chemotherapy interactions.

Presenting the first chapter of this book to medical students for appraisal is likely to start some vital and passionate conversation, and may open up an opportunity to look at healthcare with a broader perspective. GPs and specialists need to be informed of the evidence base for these therapies. I highly recommend this book to any practitioner who wants a consolidated, referenced guide for a complementary approach to common general practice problems.

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Fast Facts: Depression, 3rd edition

Mark Haddad and Jane Gunn

Oxford: Health Press Limited, 2011
ISBN 9781905832866



The authors adeptly summarise, in a very readable way, current knowledge about depression, an illness contributing hugely to the burden of disease worldwide. In seven chapters, they cover a vast area, ranging from the history of depression to the complications of self-harm and suicide. Each chapter is followed by a brief summary emphasising the main points. The writing style and presentation make for a very informative and quick read.

Depression is projected to be the leading cause of disability in developed countries by 2030. Only 50% of patients will escape with just one episode; 10–20% will have chronic depression from the first

episode; the remainder will have, on average, 5–9 further episodes. These daunting facts are clearly presented in this book. The authors present a clear overview of high-prevalence conditions, such as minor depression, and discuss rates of bipolar disorder. A separate chapter covers identification of depression in clinical practice.

The chapter on prevention and management is fascinating and discusses treatments ranging from St John's Wort and exercise to specific therapies, with a brief mention of medication. Space constraints have dictated that clinical manifestations and management of depression could be dealt with at a basic level only.

There is a comprehensive chapter on the overlap between depression and physical health problems,

an area neglected by psychiatrists, but of daily relevance to GPs and other specialists. Chronic medical illnesses are associated with double the risk of depression, and the coexistence of two illnesses impairs management and prognosis of both.

The last chapter summarises the assessment and management of suicide and self-harm, but at a basic level. The book concludes with a brief list of depression resources available in the UK, USA and Australia.

This book is well suited for those who want a comprehensive overview of the realities of depression, its overall management and its impact on society in general. But do understand it is not a primer of depression treatment.

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