

Book Reviews

Pharmacy Practice

K. Taylor and G. Harding, (Eds) ISBN 0 415 27159 2. Published by Taylor and Francis, London. Paperback and Hardback. 561 Pages

At last, a book that recognises Pharmacy Practice (or Social Pharmacy) as a subject in its own right. This book will be a tremendous help to pharmacy practice lectures and a relief to students who have problems of getting to grips with what the new subject of Pharmacy Practice really involves.

Edited by Taylor and Harding and including 32 chapters, the book contains an impressive list of contributors from pharmacy, sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, health economics and communication. The authors focus on the practice of pharmacy “in its social and behavioural context” and hope this book will equip the reader to become effective health care providers. This is in line with recent concerns that current pharmacy education does not fulfill the needs of society, and that pharmacy as practised today is not according to “New Horizon” goals.

Each chapter is followed by “self-assessment questions” and “key-points for answers”, often useful to read before the actual chapter is revised. A brief introduction to each of the seven parts would also have been helpful to prepare the reader for the learning ahead.

Part one (comprising three chapters) deals with “The development of pharmacy practice”, and

gives a brief but useful history of pharmacy. In my experience, this is a topic often overlooked in European pharmacy curricula. The workforce in pharmacy and “corporalisation” is described. The hitherto isolated development of hospital and community pharmacy is highlighted and the importance of information transfer between the sectors is discussed.

Part two: “International dimensions of pharmacy practice” has three chapters dealing with European, North American and developing nations pharmacy. The European chapter points out differences in community pharmacies in size, staffing, products available and services provided, whereas the North American chapter describes a rather chaotic marked model in the US, Canada and Mexico. Both these chapters seem to give a lot of detail without getting to any explicit point, something which is reflected in at times rather irrelevant “self-assessment questions”. The European chapter would have been better had it introduced the European Union drug assessment system, EMEA, and how new drugs are, or are not, introduced to the European market. As for North America, a more critical review of their system, and a wider political discussion on recent major reforms (such as those

during the Clinton administration), and an overall discussion of free market versus public health care would be more challenging for the student.

The chapter on pharmacy in developing countries is thorough and deals with morbidity, mortality, essential drug lists, drug donations, counterfeit products, cultural perspectives and self-medications. It is a joy to read and the self-assessment questions correspond elegantly with the text.

In part three on "Health, illness and medicines" there are five chapters, where the first gives the reader insight to why it is important for pharmacists to learn and understand the social context of health and illness, and deals both with the sick role and lay view on medicines. The second chapter, although UK focussed, gives insight into recent health reports and the recent restructures of the national health care system. This should be useful for European students in the long term as many of the UK reforms will probably be imitated by other European countries in the years to come. The third chapter on consumption of OTC drugs suggests that increased independence for patients is often driven by government attempts to reduce the state financed drug costs. The next chapter focus on health promotion and myths related to lifestyle, information and behaviours. The last chapter of this part is a well written chapter on compliance and concordance, where patients' beliefs and health psychology theories are used to discuss how pharmacists can assist a patient-centered approach to medication.

In Part four, "Professional Practice" (comprising four chapters), the editors themselves give a clear introduction to the issue of professionalism. The following chapter on professional judgement and ethical dilemmas gives an overview of the history of law theory and principles, and discusses dilemmas and responsibility in prescription errors and dispensing errors. I particularly enjoyed the section on responsibility for professional development and the discussion of audit and guidelines. However, the chapter on

"Communication" is, in my opinion, not up to scratch. The text consists mainly of bullet-points on how communicate. It would have been more useful to have a chapter more in line with professional practice and compliance as discussed earlier, and to include practical student exercises on how to communicate (role-plays, back-to-back exercises, video filming of consultations etc.)

Part five: "Meeting the pharmaceutical care needs of specific populations" consists of six chapters dealing with ethnic minorities, parents and children, pregnancy and breastfeeding, elderly and their carers, mental health problems, and injecting drug users. I welcome the chapter on ethnic minorities expectations of health care, a topic often overlooked in pharmacy curricula. Community pharmacies are often the first port of call for mothers and pregnant women, and I feel that this could have been discussed in even greater depth than presented. In the chapter of elderly and their carers, there is no discussion of the ethics of the extensive medication of elderly or the cost this involves. The chapter on mental health problems is very UK specific, and even though it deals with how patients should be met by health professionals, there is no discussion of pharmacists own stamina towards mental health. Injecting drug users are regular visitors in community pharmacies, and the authors give a detailed insight into how pharmacists might assist the users towards better health. I like the thoroughness of the chapter, but the idea that pharmacists should give advice on having a good diet seems naive to me.

Part six: "Measuring and regulating medicines use" has two chapters, both important contributions to pharmacy practice. Pharmacovigilance and pharmacoepidemiology discuss the thalidomide incident (an example repeatedly used in the book), and introduces the reader to prevalence and incidence as well as various study designs. In the next edition, please include the formulae! Pharmacy students require this, and presenting mathematical formulae as "text

only" is not an advantage. For the ATC classification system, a presentation of all 14 main groups would be valuable, not just a taste of the system. The chapter on health economics gives a good introduction to the principles of health economics theory and context. However, I do miss a cost discussion of parallel import and generics.

I have mixed feeling about Part seven: "Research methods" (nine chapters) for two reasons. It tries to cover too much methodology in too little space. Secondly, there is a lot of repetition of key methodology elements, probably because the chapters are written by different authors. If the intention of this section is to introduce the reader to the research methods available, it is acceptable, but for students setting up their own research it is at best a source for where to look further for help. Although critical of the content of some chapters, I think the last

part of the book presents useful information to pharmacy students, for example why we measure health (Chapter 24), useful historic review of models of health, illness and disease such as the biomedical and the social model (Chapter 25), and challenges pharmacists meet in conducting audit in their own environment (Chapter 32).

For lecturers and students in Pharmacy Practice, this book is a tremendous step forward! I recommend the book to Pharmacy Practice lecturers, and know that students will be thrilled to at last have a "solid" introduction to the subject.

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Dietary Supplements

Second Edition, Pamela Mason, (Ed.) ISBN 0 85369 459 1. Published by the Pharmaceutical Press, London. Hardback. 304 Pages

The preface describes the need for such a book, how dietary supplements have doubled in the last six years and that, coupled with a surge in public demand for the products and information about the products has led to several publications. Pamela Mason describes the variation in public knowledge and the quality of the information available and acknowledges that "developing an evidence base for dietary supplements has... been hampered by a lack of good quality evidence." Thus, the aim of this book is to dispel myths and provide a useful source of information.

The book comprises a comprehensive overview of 72 dietary supplements (not including herbal products). The book is set out in an easy to use format with useful definitions (such as recommended daily intake) and classifications of

vitamins and minerals and their uses. She also provides information on legal aspects and the status of the products under review, including similarities and differences between the UK, Europe and the US. Additionally, there is a useful section on "claims", both medicinal and health claims and how these claims affect their status. The introduction provides a summary of the "role of the healthcare professional" and the advice they should provide, the level of counselling that is appropriate and some summary guidelines for their use. The reference sources are fairly current and the section benefits from a high degree of relevance.

The first chapter is a useful and explanatory "how to use this book" which describes the 72 commonly available dietary supplements,

including vitamins, minerals, trace elements and other substances, such as garlic, ginseng and fish oils. The book is subsequently arranged in alphabetical order and information is provided by "description", "nomenclature", "units", "constituents", "human requirements", "definitions", "intakes", "action", "dietary sources", "metabolism", "bioavailability", "deficiency", "possible uses", "precautions/contraindications", "pregnancy/breast feeding", "adverse effects", "interactions", "dose". Because of the standard format, the book is very easy to use and each section has a conclusion to assist the reader.

In summary, the book is robust, easy to use and comprehensive, which clearly and logically monographs dietary supplements. It is both an essential reference source for the healthcare professional and a useful text for the individual interested in the ever-increasing promotion of dietary supplementation. Highly recommended.

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Quality Assurance of Aseptic Preparation Services

Third Edition, Alison M. Beaney, (Ed.) ISBN 0 85369 4877. Published by the Pharmaceutical Press, London. 2001

The paramount importance of patient safety means that hospital aseptic units must continually review their facilities, processes and quality assurance procedures to ensure the maintenance of the appropriate quality standards. This relatively short book, edited by Alison Beaney on behalf of the NHS Quality Control Committee, provides guidelines and standards which are applicable to all products prepared aseptically within hospital pharmacy departments for administration to patients.

The book is divided into fifteen short chapters and five appendices, with the content presented in short points and tables, with a multitude of sub-headings. The format and presentation is similar to that employed in the *Rules and Guidance for pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Distributors* published by the MCA. Following an introduction and definition of terms, the

subsequent sections cover: risk management, management, formulation, stability and shelf life, facilities, documentation, personnel, training and competency assessment. There are also sections on aseptic processing, monitoring, cleaning, starting materials, product approval, storage, distribution and audit.

This is a well written and extensively referenced book. Its aim is to clearly present guidelines and standards for aseptic preparation, rather than to present an introduction sterile products and aseptic production *per se*. This the book achieves admirably and as such, it will be an invaluable resource for those working in those hospital pharmacy departments which provide aseptic preparation services. Moreover, it will be very useful for those responsible for the teaching of aseptic preparation to pharmacy students. *Quality Assurance of Aseptic Preparation Services*

contains a wealth of pertinent information, clearly and concisely presented and is suitable for use as "stand alone" text by students in their self-directed learning. Alternatively, tutors will find much that can be utilised in their own teaching. For instance, the clearly outlined procedures for validating aseptic production

processes, products and operators are readily adaptable for use as practical exercises.

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