



### **A Canadian Woman's Health Guide: Taking Charge by Taking Care**

Marilyn Linton. 322 pp. Macmillan Canada; Gage Distribution Co., Agincourt, Ont. 1996. \$27.95. ISBN 0-7715-7382-0

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<b>Overall rating:</b>	Excellent
<b>Strengths:</b>	Contains accurate and balanced information; well organized and very readable
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	Covers a broad range of topics superficially; insufficient information on any one issue
<b>Audience:</b>	Fairly well educated and motivated women

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This is an excellent book, intended as a background reference for female health consumers. It will be appreciated by women who want reliable information in a balanced format. However, it is not a medical guide or a manual for self-treatment. Information is presented from the perspectives of both physicians and the women who are consumers of health care in Canada.

The first section of the book discusses the current women's health movement in Canada, emphasizes the team approach to good health and covers risk assessment, including family history and general preventive measures such as diet, exercise, smoking cessation and a balanced lifestyle.

The author gives an accurate account of the expanding interest in women's health resulting from the recent realization that women's disease risks, presentation, diagnosis and response to treatment differ from those of men. She notes that, just as new knowledge on women's health is coming to light, the new approach to health care in general involves the patient as an informed member of the decision-making team. The author strives to give the patient the accurate information she requires to take ulti-

mate responsibility for her own health.

The second section of the book, entitled "Canadian women's top 15 health issues," explores these issues one by one, in an organized fashion. Each chapter in this section begins with some basic information about the issue and its relevance to women, followed by risks, risk reduction, prevention and some treatment options. Finally, many chapters present brief profiles of women who have successfully dealt with the illness or condition in their lives. Each chapter concludes with a list of recommended resources — information and organizations — available to women who need more comprehensive information or assistance.

The author tends to focus on the areas where women have choices to make rather than on details of medical or surgical treatments. The 15 topics covered are heart disease, breast cancer, smoking, alcohol use, sexual and reproductive health (2 chapters), mental wellness, skin problems, headaches, eating disorders, osteoporosis, menopause, arthritis, disabilities and connective tissue diseases. This list certainly matches the most frequently asked questions in my practice.

I have often thought that a great deal of a family physician's time is spent giving general, even common-sense, advice that used to be given by members of the extended family or by close friends. *Taking Charge by Taking Care* is full of this type of general, sound advice and reliable information, which should be welcomed by the patient and her physician alike.

#### **Alison Jane Bennett, BSc, MD**

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### **Canadian Medical Law: An Introduction for Physicians, Nurses and Other Health Care Professionals**

2nd ed. Barney Sneiderman, John C. Irvine and Philip H. Osborne. 618 pp. Carswell Thomson Professional Publishing, Scarborough, Ont. 1995. \$95 hardcover; \$62 paperback. ISBN 0-459-56000-X, hardcover; ISBN 0-459-56006-9, paperback

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<b>Overall rating:</b>	Very good
<b>Strengths:</b>	Covers a broad range of medicolegal issues
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	Very long and excessively wordy; the law covered is current only to September 1995
<b>Audience:</b>	Physicians, nurses, lawyers and students in these professions as well as others working in health care

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This book covers a broad range of medicolegal issues in health care, including consent to treatment, medical negligence, mental-health and public-health law, issues in reproductive choice, organ and tissue donation, euthanasia, assisted suicide and the termination of life-prolonging treatment. Generally speaking, the authors address the state of the law in Canada. When there is a paucity of Canadian jurisprudence, or jurisprudence in the US, Britain or other countries illustrates the approach that could be taken by Canadian courts, the authors refer liberally to legal decisions from these countries.

Overall, this book is a very good reference work. At 618 pages, it is lengthy for an introductory textbook. At times it is excessively wordy; the same points could be made more concisely. Its length makes it more suitable as a reference than as a quick overview of the Canadian medicolegal system. However, it is extremely comprehensive and addresses the subject matter in the detail that is re-



quired. This book would be an extremely useful reference for health care practitioners, students in the health care professions and others who work in the health care system. Its comprehensiveness makes it a very useful starting point for information or research on Canadian medicolegal issues.

The chapters on euthanasia, assisted suicide and the termination of life-prolonging treatment are very well written and informative. The discussion includes termination of treatment for patients who are mentally competent adults, mentally incompetent adults, mature minors and children or neonates. The role of the family in the decision-making process is considered. The legal implications of do-not-resuscitate orders, advance directives, living wills and power of attorney are reviewed. The section on euthanasia is illustrated with a discussion of cases in which physicians and nurses have been charged with murder after having been involved in the "mercy killing" of patients.

A weakness in this text is that the law is current only to September 1995. In certain areas of health law, the jurisprudence has expanded rapidly, even in the 18 months since the information in this book was updated. In Ontario in 1996, 2 significant judicial decisions were rendered in wrongful birth cases. Also in Ontario in March 1996, the Consent to Treatment Act, 1992 was repealed, the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 was significantly amended, and the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 was enacted. Because many areas in this field are changing rapidly, the authors advise readers that no textbook is a substitute for legal advice if one is considering the legal implications of a course of conduct.

#### **Randy M. Zettle, MD, LLB**

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### ***Books and other media received***

#### ***Livres et autres documents reçus***

##### **Books for patients**

**The Island of the Colorblind and Cycad Island.** Oliver Sacks. 298 pp. Illust. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York/Random House of Canada, Ltd., Mississauga. 1996. \$31. ISBN 0-679-45114-5

**Morgentaler: A Difficult Hero.** Catherine Dunphy. 474 pp. Random House of Canada, Ltd., Mississauga. 1996. \$32. ISBN 0-394-22391-8

**Surviving an Eating Disorder: Strategies for Family and Friends.** Michele Siegel, Judith Brisman and Margot Weinschel. 269 pp. Harper Perennial; HarperCollins Publishers, Toronto. 1997. \$18.50. ISBN 0-06-095233-4

**What's Wrong with Grandma? A Family's Experience with Alzheimer's.** Margaret Shawver. 62 pp. Illust. Prometheus Books, Amherst, NY. 1996. US\$14.95. ISBN 1-57392-107-6

##### **Cancer**

**Between Bench and Bedside: Science, Healing and Interleukin-2 in a Cancer Ward.** Ilana Löwy. 370 pp. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1996. US\$39.95. ISBN 0-674-06809-2

**Canadian Cancer Incidence Atlas/Répartition géographique de l'incidence du cancer au Canada.** vol. 1. 158 pp. Illust. Health Canada, Ottawa. 1995. \$29.95. ISBN 0-660-60022-6

##### **Dermatology**

**Adult and Pediatric Dermatology: A Color Guide to Diagnosis and Treatment.** Lowell A. Goldsmith, Gerald S.

Lazarus and Michael D. Tharp. 627 pp. Illust. F.A. Davis Company, Philadelphia. 1997. US\$59.95. ISBN 0-8036-0146-8

##### **Emergency medicine**

**Handbook of Emergencies in General Practice.** 2nd ed. Norman Lawrence, Joanna Watts, Richard Harrington and Sally Hope. 380 pp. Oxford University Press, Oxford, England; Oxford University Press Canada, Don Mills, Ont. 1997. \$49.50. ISBN 0-19-262545-4

##### **Ethics**

**The Ethics of Human Gene Therapy.** LeRoy Walters and Julie Gage Palmer. 209 pp. Illust. Oxford University Press, Oxford, England; Oxford University Press Canada, Don Mills, Ont. 1997. \$42.95. ISBN 0-19-505955-7

##### **Health care**

**Telemedicine: A Guide to Assessing Telecommunications in Health Care.** Edited by Marilyn J. Field. 271 pp. National Academy Press, Washington. 1996. \$39.95. ISBN 09-309-05531-8

##### **History**

**A Century of Caring: 1897-1997 — The History of the Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada.** Sheila Penney. 148 pp. Illust. VON Canada, Ottawa. 1996. Price not stated. ISBN 0-9681111-0-6

**On the Shoulders of Giants: Eponyms and Names in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.** Thomas F. Baskett. 270 pp. Illust. Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, London, England. 1996. Price not stated. ISBN 0-902331-94-9

##### **Miscellaneous**

**The Amputee CD-ROM.** *Corel Medical Series.* Corel Corporation, Ottawa. 1996. US\$69.