



Books and other media

Livres et autres documents

CD-ROM

AIDS Compact Library 1996-1997

Edited by Deborah Cotton. Appleton & Lange New Media; Electronic Press Ltd., Cambridge, Mass. 1995. Price not stated. ISBN 0-8385-0296-2

Overall rating:	Good
Strengths:	User-friendly interface; commonly used search strategies; complete online help database
Weaknesses:	None, apart from those of any simple reference CD-ROM
Audience:	Clinicians and researchers working in the area of AIDS; any health care professional seeking up-to-date information on AIDS
System requirements:	DOS version: 386 MHz processor, 3 MB free hard drive space, 2 MB RAM (4 MB recommended), CD-ROM drive, MS-DOS version 3.3, VGA monitor; Windows 3.1 version: same as DOS version, except 4 MB RAM (8 MB recommended); Macintosh version: Macintosh LC, 3 MB hard drive space, 4 MB RAM (8 MB recommended), CD-ROM drive, System 7, 12" or larger colour monitor

This medical reference CD-ROM contains an extensive collection of information on almost all aspects of AIDS. There is a huge database of citations from various well-known medical journals, categorized by their source and the nature of the research.

If you are familiar with performing literature searches, then you are no stranger to the interface of this CD-ROM. As a reference library, it contains most of the tools needed to retrieve information by either key words or concepts related to key words. The search strategies are best

described as a simplified version of complex commercial engines such as MEDLINE, and their use is well described in the manual.

Results of the search can be loosely associated with the requested key word by using a fuzzy-logic option or closely linked by using a relational option; a dictionary and thesaurus are also provided to assist the user. While viewing the results, the user may highlight any portion of the text, cut it and paste it to the search window to provide a faster search.

Full text of many articles are also available right on the CD-ROM. The user may bookmark important positions in the database or print out any portion of an article for reference. During each session, the program also produces a history of all of the searches and results, which can be saved or printed. The user can also make notes in the blank margins at his or her convenience.

The interface of the Windows 3.1 version is very user-friendly, with all controls accessible through the mouse whenever possible. The user's manual is very small and simple, but this is compensated for by a rich online help database. This help file has much the same interface as the AIDS database. The display is standard, clear and well organized.

The technical support is readily accessible and friendly. If necessary, technical-support staff will walk you through the problem step by step. Unfortunately, in this age of the Internet, the publisher, Appleton & Lange, does not offer Internet support, nor does its computer technical support service, Electronic Press. The CD-ROM is updated quarterly. The package comes with 4 free future updates; however, the cost of subsequent updates is not mentioned in the package.

This CD-ROM contains several volumes' worth of AIDS-related texts, transformed into an electronic version and supplemented with tools to facilitate their retrieval. The *AIDS Compact Library* is a very good reference in a medical CD-ROM library, and I would recommend it to any researcher or clinician working in the area of AIDS as a concentrated and up-to-date source of information.

Stephen Lai, MD
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BOOKS

The Troubled Helix: Social and Psychological Implications of the New Human Genetics

Edited by Theresa Marteau and Martin Richards. 359 pp. Cambridge University Press, New York. 1996. US\$64.95. ISBN 0-521-46288-6

Overall rating:	Excellent
Strengths:	Comprehensive, objective and readable
Weaknesses:	No significant weaknesses
Audience:	Health care professionals, psychologists, social scientists and well-informed public

This book is yet another addition to the rapidly expanding literature on the medical, ethical, legal and social implications of the developments in human genetics. It is a particularly satisfying contribution in terms of the wide range of topics, the breadth and depth of the material presented and the objectivity of the presentation.

In the first of the book's 3 sections, the reader is immediately gripped by a series of personal sto-



ries by people with direct experience of genetic testing. All of the stories are poignant and reflect the rapid evolution of testing options that families face. The book highlights the burden placed on individuals and their families by genetic conditions. This section introduces a recurring theme, namely, that those with first-hand experience of genetic disease and testing have been heard very little in comparison with professionals.

The second section of the book deals with the major areas that constitute the practice of clinical genetics. Essential for overall understanding is a very useful, condensed, but comprehensive account of the content and techniques of the new genetics. Other chapters deal extensively with the objectives and practice of genetic counselling, including research attempts to elucidate the processes of communication and decision-making and the perception of risk. Genetic testing, in the different contexts of adult-onset disease, reproduction and the testing of children, is also considered. Child testing has recently been subject of several generally restrictive policy statements by various professional bodies. This topic is given a separate chapter in which many aspects of these recommendations are persuasively questioned in light of the inadequacy of available data and the bias resulting from excessive professional input.

The final section of this book deals with the social milieu in which the new genetics is practised. There are chapters on the history of the eugenics movement, ethics and law, racism, kinship and feminist viewpoints. Most compelling is an exploration of the public understanding of genetics. This discussion incorporates a description of new research approaches to measuring the social representation of genetics to which the public is exposed. It emphasizes

the limits of improving biologic knowledge.

These contributions have been assembled from a wide variety of experts and are valuable on their own. In addition, the editors have done an admirable job of enhancing the book's readability.

This is a valuable and well-referenced compilation on the social and psychologic issues raised by genetic testing today — an ever more important topic. Although it deals with issues in some depth, it can easily be read by those who do not have a background in the relevant disciplines. I hope that all readers will heed the call for greater and wider consideration of the concerns raised.

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Medicine and the Internet: Introducing Online Resources and Terminology

Bruce C. McKenzie. 206 pp. Illust. Oxford University Press, Oxford, England; Oxford University Press Canada, Don Mills, Ont. 1996. \$39.50. ISBN 0-19-262705-8

Overall rating:	Excellent
Strengths:	Clear, concise and comprehensive; helps anyone get up and running on the Internet; contains plenty of guidance for use of the Internet in medical practice
Weaknesses:	The World Wide Web could have been given a bigger proportion of the book
Audience:	All physicians; targeted at computer neophytes

This is an exceptional book. It stands head and shoulders above the crowd of poorly written books put out hurriedly to cash in on the recent interest in the Internet. Author Bruce McKenzie actually delivers

what he advertises: a book that can bring a physician who knows little about computing and nothing about the Internet to the point of using the Internet as part of his or her everyday practice.

McKenzie assumes nothing about his readers. He starts from the basics of what type of computer to consider, through modems and Internet providers. If you do not know what these terms mean, you will before you are half-way through the book. If you do know, you will not be insulted by patronizing chapters, and you will still learn something.

You might expect a British book to be full of information on Internet sites and resources that are irrelevant to Canadian physicians. However, except for the Internet provider list, all of the sites mentioned can be reached from anywhere in the world. McKenzie does not overlook *CMA Online* or McMaster University's Cochrane Collaboration site.

The section on online ethics contains information I have never seen anywhere else. Besides the usual "netiquette" for e-mail and newsgroups, it discusses how to cite an online source in a research paper. It also introduces some subjects that have to be addressed in the near future. These include confidentiality, the reliability of information on the Internet and the ethics of using references from Internet resources that may disappear. All of these topics have long worried me. McKenzie does not have any pat answers, but he asks the questions well.

The sections on older Internet services, such as Veronica, Archie and gopher, are lucid descriptions of these features and their use. However, today most users have a "net browser" and, in fact, think that the Internet *is* the World Wide Web (WWW). This part of the Internet will grow.

McKenzie spends more time than I would discussing Com-



puServe as an Internet service provider. After reading *Medicine and the Internet*, the user should be able to access the Internet through an independent service provider, which gives the user a lot more control and flexibility than online services such as CompuServe.

Any weaknesses in this book are trivial, balanced against how well the book fulfils its promise.

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Scarborough, Ont.

Saunders Manual of Medical Practice

Edited by Robert E. Rakel. 1247 pp. Illust. W.B. Saunders Company/Harcourt Brace and Company, Philadelphia; W.B. Saunders Canada, Toronto. 1996. \$138. ISBN 0-7216-5192-5

Overall rating: Good
Strengths: Short, direct discussions of common conditions
Weaknesses: Lacks depth; no photographs
Audience: Family physicians

This book identifies busy primary care physicians as its target audience. By calling it a "manual," the editor and publisher align the book with other well-known publications of the genre of the "Washington Manual"; but, because it weighs 3 kg and is 5 cm thick, this book will not be found in anyone's lab-coat pocket. Nevertheless, primary care clinicians will find its short, direct discussions of frequently encountered conditions appealing. The breadth of subjects covered and the inclusion of 58 well-illustrated procedures will appeal particularly to physicians in rural practice, who may be responsible for patients in the office, hospital and emergency-department settings. Thus, sections on nasal fracture reduction, endotracheal intubation and abdominal diagnostic tap coexist hap-

pily alongside discussions of breast-feeding and advance directives. In some of these critical areas, however, this textbook needs to be supplemented by more narrowly focused but more comprehensive material.

The chapter organization is interesting and different. Of the 451 topics presented, 318 focus on disease, 75 on symptoms and 58 on procedures. These are grouped by physiologic system. For example, the section on eye, ear, nose and throat problems begins with a chapter outlining 9 common symptoms (from "red eye" to "hiccups"), followed by 12 chapters on diseases. Interspersed among these chapters are discussions of 6 procedures. Chapters on diseases contain subsections on causes, symptoms, clinical findings, laboratory tests, differential diagnoses, treatments and follow-up. Symptom sections emphasize differential diagnoses, key questions to ask, clinical findings, tests, management and follow-up. Each section is self-contained and written by a separate author.

Each chapter is written in summary form. The reader will not find a discussion of the pathophysiologic aspects of disease or the medical background to controversial subjects. In some areas the summary format is taken to an uncomfortable extreme. The chapter on arrhythmias covers the entire subject in 5 pages of dense point form. Even busy clinicians may have time to read a more leisurely presentation of such an evolving and controversial subject. However, the commonly accepted conclusions are provided, and these are up to date. The influence of evidence-based medicine is clear and its inclusion is commendable. A short (occasionally annotated) bibliography follows each topic.

The text is uncluttered, and a 2-colour icon-based highlighting system draws the eye to the subsections of each chapter. Line-drawn illustrations are plentiful; however, no pho-

tographs are used, a lack most keenly felt in the section on dermatology.

Practitioners will not find everything they want in this volume, particularly if their habit is to "read around their cases." However, this is a useful textbook to refer to "on the fly."

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The Stop Smoking Workbook

Lori Stevic-Rust and Anita Maximin. 171 pp. Illust. Raincoast Books, 8680 Cambie St., Vancouver BC V6P 6M9. 1996. \$17.95. ISBN 1-57224-037-7

Overall rating: Fair
Strengths: Emphasizes the importance of preparation and provides practical advice; well designed and easy to read; addresses fundamental issues
Weaknesses: Tends to downplay addiction and emphasize behavioural issues; strategic thinking in establishing quit dates, appropriate use of nicotine-replacement therapy and relapse management not emphasized enough
Audience: Smokers

Many clinicians recognize the value of self-help materials in informing, motivating, guiding and sustaining those embarked on the journey toward cessation of smoking. The authors of *The Stop Smoking Workbook*, both practising psychologists, have provided a resource for would-be nonsmokers in a relatively inexpensive, readable format. Within its pages are found a straightforward synopsis of the "stages-of-change" concept as applied to quitting smoking, a recitation of the health consequences of tobacco consumption and a description of the specific advantages of becoming a nonsmoker. Most useful are the particular strategies that would-be nonsmokers can



apply as they prepare to quit, as they struggle with the very real symptoms of withdrawal and as they experience the pronounced longing for their old friend — the cigarette.

Smoking is a complex behaviour involving physical addiction, strongly conditioned behaviours and social reinforcement. Nicotine-replacement therapy (NRT) allows practitioners to provide their smoking patients with a window of opportunity in which to learn a new repertoire of nonsmoking behaviours, free from the rigours and discomfort of withdrawal symptoms. Sadly, the authors of this workbook see the NRT window as being defined by the NRT products' standard prescribing protocols. Many practitioners involved in smoking cessation now prescribe NRT for longer periods and in higher doses than were initially recommended.

Much of this book deals with peripheral issues. There are better sources of information on weight loss, low-calorie recipes, exercise strategies, stress management and social-skills development. Nonetheless, the specific information concerning smoking cessation is consistent with current thinking and is of definite interest to those who want to ensure that their "ducks are in a row" before their target quit date.

Would I recommend this book to patients? On occasion. But there are more concise, readable and focused resources that are more readily available, lend themselves more readily to distribution in a practice and better complement and support counselling by health care professionals.

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Books and other media received

Livres et autres documents reçus

Books for patients

Free Your Mind: The Book for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth — and Their Allies. Ellen Bass and Kate Kaufman. 417 pp. Illust. Harper Perennial; HarperCollins Publishers, Toronto. 1996. \$19.50. ISBN 0-06-095104-4

Ethics

Birth to Death: Science and Bioethics. Edited by David C. Thomasma and Thomasine Kushner. 382 pp. Illust. Cambridge University Press, New York. 1996. US\$64.95. ISBN 0-521-46297-5

HIV/AIDS

TB/HIV: A Clinical Manual. Anthony D. Harries and Dermot Maher. 135 pp.

World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland. 1996. US\$10.80.

Pharmacology

Nonprescription Drug Reference for Health Professionals. 1st ed. Edited by Patricia Carruthers-Czyzewski, M. Claire Gillis, Dianne Letwin and Louise Travill. 792 pp. Illust. Canadian Pharmaceutical Association, Ottawa. 1996. \$120. ISBN 0-919-115-47-0

Psychiatry

Images in Psychiatry: Canada. Edited by Quentin Rae-Grant. 299 pp. American Psychiatric Press, Inc., Wash. 1996. US\$48. ISBN 0-88048-900-6

Surgery

Practical Minor Surgery (CD-ROM). David Crawford and Chris Khoo. Overseas Publishers Association; Harwood Academic Publishers; University of Toronto Press, Buffalo, NY. 1996. US\$117. ISBN 90-5702-006-8