Handbook of the Medical Consequences of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, 2nd edition

What is the difference between Wernicke encephalopathy and Korsakoff amnesia? What is the mechanism of alcohol-induced liver disease? Are there any medical consequences of hallucinogen use? Does prenatal cocaine exposure have any developmental consequences?

You can find the answers to these and many other questions in the second edition of the Handbook of the Medical Consequences of Alcohol and Drug Abuse. This book is part of The Haworth Medical Press series in neuropharmacology and was written with the goal of bringing the most recent findings in this field to scientists, physicians, other clinicians, and advanced students. The chapters provide in-depth and well-referenced reviews of the medical consequences of substance abuse. The book covers the acute and chronic effects of alcohol, its effects on brain structure and function and on brain neurochemistry, and the effects of prenatal exposure. Other substances covered include cannabis, opioids, hallucinogens, nicotine, and a variety of nonprescription drugs such as antihistamines, caffeine, dextromethorphan, and ephedrine. One chapter focuses on the interactions between alcohol and medications, and another on the special issues that arise for people who have both substance-use disorders and other mental health disorders. The contributors have taken a scholarly approach, providing evidence to support associations between health problems and substance use, explaining the pathophysiology, and supplying prevalence estimates. Each chapter concludes with a summary section that provides a concise overview.

Most textbooks on substances of abuse focus on the problems of abuse and dependence, including aspects of loss of control over the substance, harms to the individual's ability to function, harms to family and society, and treatment approaches for these problems. This book is unique in its orientation toward the health effects of substance abuse. Although this book is not a treatment guide, the extensive information compiled in this work will be valuable to both researchers and medical clinicians working with people with substance use problems in any setting.

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Pediatric Epilepsy: Diagnosis and Therapy, 3rd edition

Epilepsy is a complex and common disorder that often begins in infancy and childhood. The third edition of Pediatric Epilepsy: Diagnosis and Therapy is a comprehensive reference text about epilepsy in the pediatric population. In the preface, the editors, all eminent child neurologists, state that the goal of this book continues to be assisting all professionals involved in the care of pediatric patients with seizures and epilepsy. I believe that the editors and authors have accomplished this goal. The book is an excellent resource for developing a strong understanding of current practice in the diagnosis and treatment of pediatric epilepsy.

This book differs from other child neurology texts because of its focus on pediatric epilepsy. The book is well organized into 7 main sections. The first 3 sections create the foundation for a comprehensive understanding of the diagnosis of epilepsy in infancy and childhood. The section on basic mechanisms explains the pathophysiology of seizures and epilepsy in the immature brain. This section covers topics that pediatric practitioners will find particularly useful, such as channel mutations in epilepsy. This is a rapidly evolving field, and the book helped me to understand several hereditary forms of epilepsy. Section II comprehensively reviews the classification, epidemiology, etiology, and diagnosis of epilepsies in childhood. The chapter on the first of these topics offers an interesting discussion about the history of epilepsy classification and sets out the current accepted classification of epileptic seizures and the various forms of epilepsy. This is important because the selection of drug therapies is based on their efficacy for particular seizure types and/or syndromes. The 14 chapters in Section III are dedicated to the presentation of age-related syndromes, from the newborn period to adolescence. The chapter authors are international authorities in caring for patients with these epilepsy syndromes. This section will be useful to pharmacists because it discusses specific syndrome-related treatments. Knowledge about specific types of epilepsy will also enhance the pharmacist's ability to communicate with the patient and family.

Sections IV to VI cover the general principles of therapy, specific anticonvulsant medications, ketogenic diet, and epilepsy surgery. Chapters such as “Treatment Decisions in Childhood Seizures” are key to helping the novice practitioner understand
and contribute to successful treatment, and this type of information is often difficult to find. Anticonvulsant medications are discussed in depth, and I am sure that this information will be very useful to practising pharmacists.

The final section covers the psychosocial aspects of epilepsy. The way in which this information is presented may help the reader to gain an appreciation for some of the challenges faced by children and families living with epilepsy.

There have been many advances in the understanding and treatment of epilepsy in recent years. This book will be an essential reference for pharmacists caring for children with seizures and epilepsy. I highly recommended this book to any health care practitioner who participates in the care of infants and children with epilepsy.

**Emergency Management of Infectious Diseases**


*Emergency Management of Infectious Diseases* offers a concise overview of a wide spectrum of infectious diseases. Pharmacists in general practice will appreciate its abridged coverage of this topic. Most of the clinical chapters are short (2–5 pages) and pragmatic. Remarkably, the chapter on infective endocarditis accurately distills the information to just 4 pages, a welcome relief compared with the complicated guidelines that exist. Major sections of the book include Systems, Pediatrics, Special Populations, Current Topics, Overview of Antibiotics, Microbiology Laboratory Tests, and Infection Control Precautions. Those who are pressed for time and those who want to reflect on their learning will value the bulleted list entitled “Pearls and Pitfalls” that ends each chapter.

The book is not meant to be an authoritative tome on infectious diseases, and you will not find detailed footnotes to the text. Rather, each chapter has a reference list of reasonable length. Most of the chapter authors have included important citations from high-quality clinical journals, but a few have listed lengthy website URLs, which are prone to inaccuracy. Some authors have included a list of suggested additional readings. The editor is a medical doctor, and indeed the book is written for diagnosticians such as emergency physicians. The 81 contributors are mostly physicians from California, and several have graduate degrees in public health. Two pharmacists authored the 18-page “Antimicrobial Overview”, which is exceptionally well written and clinically relevant.

The layout of the book is visually appealing. The horizontal edge of each page is labelled with the chapter title and a modern coloured panel. The user-friendly index includes the generic names of drugs as well as the US trade names. Because of the time lag inherent in book publishing, there is no mention of doripenem, a new carbapenem that was approved in the United States in October 2007. Although an e-book version of this text has been created, it was not available for review.

The book has many useful colour images of infectious diseases, usually absent from pharmacy texts. Photos showing the appearance of blepharitis or chicken pox might be useful for new practitioners and those on the front lines of health care, including community pharmacists. The text also has many diagnostic tables and treatment charts; these are sometimes distracting and will probably not be as valuable for pharmacists. Lab values are presented in non-SI units, and the book lists antibiotics that are not available in Canada, such as nafcillin and amoxicillin–sulbactam. Most pharmacists will rightly look to more local treatment guidelines whenever possible. For example, this volume does not suggest extended-interval aminoglycosides as single empiric therapy for uncomplicated pyelonephritis, a reasonable recommendation that is used in some Canadian hospitals. The well-known and influential Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) is referenced throughout.

As might be expected from the title, pharmacists practising in the emergency department or other urgent care settings will find this book most useful. In particular, the section on special populations will be invaluable. It contains chapters on bites, lice, fever after transplantation, and other topics that frequently arise in emergent care situations. We can hope that the sections on bioterrorism and emerging infections (such as SARS and avian influenza) will be needed only rarely, if at all, but they offer a starting point if such anxiety-charged situations do arise. New pharmacists working in outpatient infectious diseases clinics can learn from this book, especially by reading the chapters on dental and orthopedic infections.

The authors and editor set out to produce a practical, clinically oriented, systems-based overview of infectious diseases, with an emphasis on emergent diagnosis and treatment. They have succeeded.

**Developing Clinical Practice Skills for Pharmacists**


In the preface to this book, the author asks, “What is it about your patient care services as a pharmacist that makes you valuable to society?” This question forms the core of this