

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Nathan A. *FASTtrack: Managing Symptoms in the Pharmacy*. London, UK: Pharmaceutical Press; 2008. 233 pp, \$29.95 (paperback) 978-0-85369-2-727-5.**

**Reviewed By:** CoraLynn B. Trewet, PharmD, MS  
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*FASTtrack* is a new series designed for undergraduate pharmacy students. These easy to read books are intended to complement textbooks and reference books to assist students in preparing for examinations. *Managing Symptoms in the Pharmacy* provides the reader with information needed for common ailments likely to be encountered in a community pharmacy.

The book is specifically written for pharmacy students who will practice in the United Kingdom (UK). It is important to note the different medical culture (999 is the number to call in an emergency), guidelines (different risk factors for heart disease), spelling of medical terms (diarrhoea), and other differences between the UK and other countries. Most importantly, the UK has different approved therapeutic agents and has several therapeutic agents available to be dispensed by a pharmacist without a prescription. For example, hyoscine is a drug highlighted for motion sickness. In the United States (US) this drug is known as scopolamine, is available as a transdermal patch, and requires a prescription.

The book is organized into 34 chapters covering 10 different body systems (eg, central nervous system) or types of conditions (eg, fungal infections). The structure of the book is straightforward and uncomplicated with sections organized in a bullet format. Each chapter is laid out with causes of the ailment, epidemiology, signs and symptoms, differential diagnosis, circumstances for referral, treatment options and additional advice for patients. Each chapter concludes with self-assessment questions and examination tips structured to prepare students for the registration examination. The answers to the questions are listed at the conclusion of the book.

The book reviews several of the systems and symptoms a pharmacist may cover, but is not comprehensive. The book starts with a cardiovascular chapter detailing more therapeutically intensive diseases such as heart failure and angina, but does not cover other diseases seen in the pharmacy such as diabetes, asthma, and depression. Instead, most of the remaining chapters discuss more common ailments such as athlete's foot, constipation, and dandruff. While the structure of the book is easy to read, in many cases, the simplicity of the content causes the book

to be at the same level of previously published books written for patients on self-care of the same ailments.

The book does incorporate many useful tables and charts for the student to use as a resource. For example, the indigestion chapter includes a table depicting the advantages and disadvantages of various antacid compounds and section about their interactions. Unfortunately, there are no references included. Additionally, the book often fails to highlight guidelines to assist the pharmacist in making recommendations that coincide with the standard of practice endorsed by specialty organizations and governmental agencies. The treatment section does not always differentiate which pharmacologic option provides the optimal therapy or recommended doses of the agents described.

The self-assessment questions at the end of every chapter provide the learner with at least one brief case example and 2 to 5 multiple-choice questions. The quality of the self-assessment questions did not appear to be at the level of board-preparation questions in the United States; however, these examinations are different. Each chapter also provides tips for taking examinations. I found most of the tips to be common sense in nature, but some may be of value to the learner who struggles with test taking.

Because this book contains information about agents available over-the-counter in the United Kingdom that are currently prescription only in the United States, this book could be used as a template for teaching pharmacists how to appropriately treat those conditions or refer to a physician for further care. The best example of this is simvastatin, a drug which has been reviewed by the US Food and Drug Administration for over-the-counter status. The book describes the drug and specifically states the licensed indications, licensing restrictions, and good practice recommendations from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain for the over-the-counter sale of their drug. This book may be a useful tool to assist in self-care questions if one is able to sort through the difficulties of being written for the UK. This book may provide value for learners in the UK; however, I believe it would have many limitations if used in a curriculum in another country.

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**Bruce L. Levin, Peter D. Hurd, Ardis Hanson, eds.**  
***Introduction to Public Health in Pharmacy*. Sudbury, Massachusetts: Jones & Bartlett, 2008. 356 pp, \$ 59.95 (paperback) ISBN 978-0-7637-3539-5.**

**Reviewed By:** Albert I. Wertheimer, PhD  
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When I was a pharmacy student, there was a book that was perfect as a textbook for pharmacy students interested in learning more about public health, and in fact, I used it when I first taught an elective course in this area. But Burton and Smith's 1970 book is out of print and obsolete today. The gap that existed for the last 25+ years has now been partially filled with the publication of *Introduction to Public Health in Pharmacy*.

This new 350-page book, edited by Bruce Levin, Peter Hurd, and Ardie Hanson and published by Jones and Bartlett helps by providing a readable book written by a number of authors with expertise in the various areas. One of the editors (Hurd) is affiliated with a pharmacy school while the other 2 are at an academic mental health institute.

There are 15 chapters, many of which are excellent, relevant, and current, and there are a number of other chapters that might be more appropriate for a different book. The early chapters (in Part I) on an overview of pharmacy and public health, applied epidemiology, disease prevention and health promotion, environmental and occupational health, and behavioral health are well organized, well written, and to the point. There is enough to enable the pharmacy student to understand underlying principles, concepts, and historical development, and current issues are provided as examples.

In Part II, the chapter on Public Health Services, which includes chronic disease, is valuable, but then the book changes direction. Next come chapters on Evalua-

tion in Pharmacy Practice, Financing, Managed Care Pharmacy, Pharmacoeconomics, rounding out Part II. While the chapters are well written, one can question their contribution to the overall topic.

Part III is a mix of some pertinent chapters and some that probably belong elsewhere. Cultural Perspectives, Public Health Informatics, and Health Emergency Preparedness are in the first group while the chapter on pharmacy practice, law, and ethics would be best found elsewhere, as would much of the final chapter on education and training.

My previous comments should not be construed as negative. The book fills a vacuum and is a contribution to the field. However, for a second edition, I hope the editors will consider some of the following suggestions: have an index longer than 6 pages, with greater detail; less unrelated materials; and additional chapters on the role of pharmaceuticals in international development and donations, the dilemma of drug counterfeiting, and the culture of corruption in much of the world.

The book would make a fine addition to a library collection or to keep as a reference, and it might serve as the basis for an upper level PharmD or graduate course or seminar on Public Health Pharmacy.

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