

instance, the chapter on spiritual care is the only one that uses case studies. Keeping the chapters brief and therefore easy to read has its advantages, but the resulting text sometimes lacks the comprehensive detail that readers may require. A couple of section headings are ambiguous: the section entitled “Assessment and Management of ‘Other’ Problems” discusses topics such as hydration, wound care, hope, and counselling, and “Specific Conditions and Situations” covers 13 topics that are mostly unrelated. This makes it difficult for the reader to retrieve the desired information without frequently consulting the index. Another disadvantage of having many contributors is that related information may be scattered and repeated in different chapters. Examples include physical medicine, which is covered in both chapters 15 and 16; episodic pain, which is embedded in a couple chapters within the section on pain; and pediatric concerns, which appear in the sections on pain and interdisciplinary issues. As well, the book could certainly have benefited from sections on psychosocial care, spirituality, and medication management; poor medication adherence in particular is a common problem in palliative care.

In summary, this textbook represents an effort to provide a vast amount of information on palliative medicine. It is successful in offering a global perspective, but for those looking for a “how to” text, this will not be the answer.

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**Ayesha Hassan**, BScPharm, MSc  
Pharmacy  
Royal Inland Hospital  
Kamloops, British Columbia

## Palliative Pharmacy Care

Strickland JM, editor. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, Bethesda, Maryland, 2009. Softcover, 227 pages. ISBN 978-1-58528-165-7. US\$80.00 (US\$64.00 for ASHP members).

By providing a “blending of published literature, unpublished data, and expertise”, the editor intends this book to be “a practical approach to palliative care and the unique role of the pharmacist”. It is a resource for pharmacists who are new to palliative care, as well as those who wish to improve their knowledge and skills in this specialized area of practice.

The first section of the book, “The Palliative Care Spectrum: Providing Care across Settings”, addresses care for patients with a diagnosis of cancer, as well as those with a variety of other disease states that are sometimes overlooked. It also discusses palliation in various settings, including the pediatric and intensive care areas.

Other sections focus on individual symptoms such as anorexia and cachexia, anxiety and depression, agitation and delirium, dyspnea, fatigue, nausea and vomiting, constipation and diarrhea, secretion management, nutrition and hydration issues, and, of course, pain management. The chapters on pain and symptom management are set up in a format whereby the

symptoms and pathophysiology are discussed first, followed by discussions of assessment and management. Often included are tables or charts summarizing causes or exacerbators of a particular symptom and treatment options, with recommended dosing. Both pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic treatments are discussed. “Key points” and “clinical pearls” are provided throughout the book; the chapters relating to pain and symptom management include case studies as well.

The final section of the book, “Beyond Drug Therapy: Key Issues for Pharmacists in Palliative Care”, deals with ethical issues, communication, research, establishing a palliative care service, and education.

Although this reviewer did find the book to be a valuable resource, it was somewhat less informative in certain aspects than other references that are now available. The recommendations for the management of symptoms and dosing charts are helpful, but not as comprehensive as those in some other references. In addition, the clinical pearls were a little disappointing; they were not really “clinical pearls” but often were more like an introduction to a specific topic. However, the suggestions for networking and listings of other palliative care resources, available traineeships, and further education are definitely valuable, and this information is often not readily available from other sources. Other interesting topics discussed were the ethical issues and advance directives. Also, I appreciated the focus on the role of the pharmacist as going beyond that which applies to the pharmaceutical realm. The book continually stresses that in the palliative care setting, the pharmacist has a role that encompasses several capacities, including supporting the family and caregivers, ensuring continuity of care, ensuring informed decision-making, attending to spiritual well-being, and supporting function. These roles are often overlooked by pharmacists but are very important, particularly in the palliative care setting. It should also be mentioned that because this is a US publication, there are some differences in medications, laboratory values, and possibly screening tools.

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**Gerri Scott**, BScPharm, FASCP  
Pharmacy  
Brandon Regional Health Centre  
Brandon, Manitoba

## Introduction to Statistics in Pharmaceutical Clinical Trials

Durham TA, Turner JR. Pharmaceutical Press, London, United Kingdom, 2008. Softcover, 240 pages. ISBN 978-0-85369-714-5. US\$49.99.

*Introduction to Statistics in Pharmaceutical Clinical Trials* is an introductory statistics textbook intended to teach basic statistical concepts to students in pharmacy, allied health professions, and clinical research. In contrast to the usual format of introductory textbooks on this topic, the authors have presented the basic concepts in the context of clinical trials conducted during devel-