

Non-medical Prescribing

Sodha M, Dhillon S, editors. Pharmaceutical Press, London, United Kingdom, 2009. Softcover, 240 pages. ISBN 978 0 85369 768 8

This book is designed for nonmedical prescribers, including pharmacists, nurses, and optometrists. The book is intended as a guide for health care professionals who are interested in becoming supplementary or independent prescribers in the United Kingdom or as a resource for those who are already prescribers.

The book has 11 chapters divided into 2 sections. The first part of the book covers the key areas to consider for prescribing safely and effectively. The second part provides a brief overview of clinical topics that are of relevance for the nonmedical prescriber.

Key learning points are presented at the beginning of each chapter, which is a nice feature and helps to orient the reader to the chapter's content. The chapters are nicely laid out, with sub-headings appropriate to the content. Each of the clinical chapters is written by a practitioner in the area and provides clinical insights and reflections from prescribers, as well as case studies.

The first few chapters focus on the legal and ethical aspects of nonmedical prescribing in the United Kingdom, as well as clinical governance. Much detail is presented about the UK legislation, as well as the clinical governance framework established by the UK's National Health Service for continuous quality improvement in health care. These first few chapters may have little relevance to pharmacists in Canada.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the principles of prescribing and of designing dosage regimens. There is also a brief review of adverse drug reactions, drug interactions, and pharmacokinetic principles. These sections are not very comprehensive, and the reader will need to refer to other resources for more detailed information. Chapter 5 is the most useful chapter of the book and is relevant to a more global audience. It focuses on the principles of clinical decision-making and evidence-based prescribing. The chapter ends with some helpful hints on errors and pitfalls to avoid in prescribing.

Chapters 6 to 11 discuss prescribing for specific clinical topics: diabetes mellitus, cardiology, respiratory diseases, palliative care, oncology, and mental health. Each chapter begins with the principles of prescribing for that area, followed by a summary of the knowledge, competencies, and skills required for prescribing. Aspiring prescribers could use these lists as self-assessment checklists to identify their learning needs. Each chapter ends with a series of four or five case studies. Most of the case studies are structured in question-and-answer format, but this approach is not consistent for all chapters, nor is the same format of questioning used for all case studies. Readers may find this inconsistency frustrating. Furthermore, the case scenarios are

specific to the United Kingdom and may use drug names that are not used in Canada.

Overall, the book is well written, easy to read, and not too technical, but it lacks the depth to be a comprehensive resource for the pharmacist prescriber. This book might be a starting point for learning about the principles of prescribing, but the reader will need to access other resources for a more comprehensive understanding. More importantly, this book is directed at practitioners in the United Kingdom and has limited applicability outside that jurisdiction. The book may be of interest to professional organizations and academics, especially as the prescribing regulations for various health care professionals continue to evolve in Canada. In this context, the book could be a helpful resource for information on the UK experience, as well as the important principles of safe and effective prescribing.

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Pharmacy in Public Health: Basics and Beyond

Carter J, Slack M. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, Bethesda, Maryland, 2010. Softcover, 390 pages. ISBN 978-1-58528-172-5. US\$50 (US\$45 for ASHP members).

The role of pharmacists is evolving and rapidly expanding. Carter and Slack start the preface of their book with a question to open further discussion: "What comes to mind when you think of pharmacy and public health?" This book is written by two professors in pharmacy practice, who focus on basic public health principles and how pharmacists can make use of the different tools of public health to serve their respective communities. This approach will be greatly appreciated by pharmacists practising in a variety of health care settings or academia.

Pharmacy in Public Health: Basics and Beyond is divided into 3 parts, covering the following topics: fundamentals of public health, concepts and tools of public health policy, and models of pharmacist-run public health programs. The first part, which discusses the foundation of public health, gives the reader a good idea of the history of public health in general, the public health system in the United States, and the role of law and ethics in public health. The second section provides information about the determinants of health, cultural competence, health promotion, disease prevention, epidemiology, and community

health. The last part is a practice-based section, which gives examples of several models of public health programs and how pharmacists have taken leading roles in these programs.

The book covers the role of pharmacists in public health in a comprehensive manner, with sidebars that highlight pertinent information in each chapter. It can be used in an educational setting, as it is laid out in a well-organized, systematic format. Every chapter starts with clear learning outcomes, an introduction, and a case study that is discussed and referred to throughout the chapter. In addition, the authors wrap up every chapter with a concise summary, end-of-chapter questions, and suggested additional readings. Moreover, instructor's resources are available online, including PowerPoint slides, image files, and additional cases. The book would also be a useful tool for pharmacy practitioners who are interested or already working in the field of public health.

The main strength of this book lies in the range of public health topics covered, from foundational material to more

advanced topics, such as the tools of public health policy and models of pharmacist-run public health programs. Its main weakness is its primary focus on the structure of the US public health system, which differs from the public health system in Canada. Pharmacists working in this field will need to refer to the Canadian Public Health Association and the Public Health Agency of Canada to learn more about Canadian policies and regulations.

This book can be generally recommended as a source book and would be suitable for every health care library.

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Advertisers' Index

	Ad Page	Prescribing Information
Amgen / Neulasta	192	260-262
ESBE Scientific / Corporate	195	—
Hospira / Precedex	188	254, 255
Pfizer / Fragmin	IBC	263-266
Pharmaceutical Partners of Canada / Safety Ad	IFC	—
Pharmaceutical Partners of Canada / Safety Ad	OBC	—
Sandoz / Corporate	186	—
Sanofi-Aventis / Plavix	191	256-259