

BOOKS

**ABC OF WORK RELATED DISORDERS\***

*Edited by David Snashall. Pp. ix + 69. Illustrated. US\$16. BMJ: 1997. ISBN 0-7279-1154-6.*

This is an excellent synopsis of occupational health, clearly written and well illustrated with appropriate content, to stimulate, rather than satisfy, the occupational health worker to reading further.

This book will be of major interest to general practitioners, and to those occupational health physicians who require rapid review and update, with carefully spaced and arranged topics which have been meticulously selected to cope with modern occupational health principles and practice.

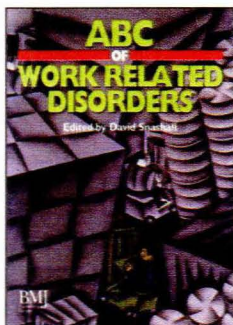
Legal issues are in keeping with the current South African context, but the formative phase of the new initiatives undertaken involving the Labour Relations Act, COID Act and the Hazardous Substances Regulations of the OHS Act, will require significant local emphasis in occupational medicine as a discipline in South Africa.

The practical implications could have further shifts of the paradigm, in which claims for compensation are only just beginning to take effect. Trends at present to include audiometric monitoring for noise-induced hearing loss at work, occupational asthma, repetitive strain injuries, and dermatological conditions currently found as a result of hazardous exposure in industry are easily referenced in sufficient detail to facilitate procedures to diagnosis, management of the condition and compensation if required.

Pre-employment and pre-placement, as well as periodic and exit medical examinations, are becoming more relevant, and this is well illustrated together with the identification of assessing fitness for work, the recognition of risk and the process by which the investigations occur for health risk assessments and monitoring and surveillance.

This is an excellent initiative of a book which has sufficient detail and description, and is strongly recommended for anyone who has at the least a passing interest in occupational health as a discipline. It certainly will fulfil a very rapidly growing and increasing need for the current industrial setting, and is well worth the relatively low cost to both occupational health workers and clinics throughout South Africa.

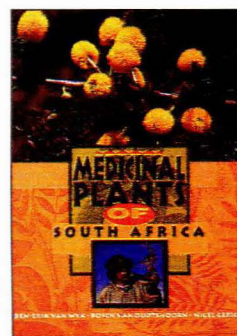
Chris van Selm



**MEDICINAL PLANTS OF SOUTH AFRICA\***

*By Ben-Erik van Wyk, Bosch van Oudsthoorn and Nigel Gericke. Pp 304. Illustrated. R138. Briza Publications. ISBN 1-875093-09-5.*

Since the appearance of Watt and Breyer-Brandwijk's work, *The Medicinal and Poisonous Plants of Southern and Eastern Africa* in 1962, there has been a distinct dearth of updated definitive work on medicinal plants in South Africa. This book should therefore be welcomed, not only to highlight again this country's floral diversity, but also to underscore the ethnobotanical uses of plants in traditional treatments. The text succeeds in providing the scientific rationale for the biological activity of certain selected medicinal plants thereby superseding many anecdotal, ritual and mystical aspects associated with the medicinal plants commonly used as remedies by herbalists and traditional healers.



The introductory part of the book gives the reader a brief but fascinating insight into traditional healing, the cultivation/harvesting of certain plant parts, the preparation of dosage forms and the methods of administration.

The remainder of the book is divided into monographs of 132 selected plants. These are arranged alphabetically according to the plant's botanical name. Each plant monograph is a systematic and skilful blend of botanical information (description and distribution), phytochemical aspects of interest (active ingredients, chemistry and pharmacology) and purported medicinal uses. The exquisite photographs adjacent to each monograph illustrate, enhance and complement the corresponding text very effectively.

**BEST SELLERS**

The top three best selling books from the Multimedia Publishing Book Department in the last month were:

**ABC of AIDS.** Fourth edition. Edited by Michael W Adler. R220. BMJ: 1997. ISBN 0-7279-1137-6.

**ABC of Diabetes.** Fourth edition. By Peter J Watkins. R176. BMJ: 1998. ISBN 0-7279-1189-9.

**ABC of Eyes.** Second edition. By P T Khaw and A R Elkington. R176. BMJ: 1994. ISBN 0-7279-0766-2.

\* Book titles marked may be ordered directly from SA Medical Association Multimedia Publishing Book Department, Private Bag X1, Pinelands, 7430, tel. (021) 531-3081, fax (021) 531-4126, e-mail multimedia@samedical.co.za or jstrydom@samedical.co.za



Perhaps the only noticeable shortcoming in the book is the authors' reliance on the *Dictionary of Natural Products on CD-ROM*. Since botanists are notoriously fickle when it comes to attributing plant names, it can happen that phytochemical work abstracted under a plant's previously acceptable botanical name will not be retrieved if that name is subsequently replaced by another. The entry under the active ingredients of *Zanthoxylum capense* illustrates this point.

The authors aver that 'no detailed study of *Z. capense* seems to have been made and the plant is chemically poorly known'. In 1970/71 two articles appeared in an accredited journal (*Phytochemistry*) describing chemical studies on the stem and root bark of *Fagara capensis* Thunb., the acceptable botanical name at that time for *Zanthoxylum capense* (L.) Waterm. No less than four alkaloids (two benzophenanthridines, a furoquinoline and a tetrahydroprotoberberine) were positively identified in this rutaceous plant. Subsequently (1973) a lignan, (+)-sesamin, was also reported under the plant's current botanical name.

The authors are nevertheless congratulated on the rather daunting task of transforming the plethora of information available on medicinal plants into an authoritative and systematic compendium in which many of the indigenous plants used as a source of *materia medica* are detailed. As an invaluable reference text, this book should be of interest to traditional healers, pharmacists, medical practitioners, herbalists, botanists, phytochemists and anyone with an abiding interest in medicinal plants.

Nathan Finkelstein

## INFECTION\*

*Oxford General Practice Series - 40. By Lesley Southgate, Cameron Lockie, Shelley Heard and Martin Wood. Pp. vii + 467. R335. Oxford University Press: 1997. ISBN 0-19-262092-4.*

This book is written for general practitioners in the United Kingdom, but would be useful for general practitioners in other countries, e.g. South Africa. The introduction emphasises the essential role of the general practitioner in the provision of vaccines and also details clinical protocols for antimicrobial chemoprophylaxis.

The book deals with a number of practical issues, e.g. differences in costs of different antibiotics and the role that the general practitioner can play in basic microbiological tests. Infections of specific organ systems are dealt with in a very clear manner. One has to accept that a busy general practitioner does not have time to constantly refer to textbooks but it is quite clear that familiarity with aspects of this book would improve the clinical management of infectious diseases in general practice. Access to this book will allow the general practitioner to make rational judgements in a variety of

common situations in which he/she may need advice. The book is recommended for its specific target audience.

Keith Klugman

## BOOKS RECEIVED

The receipt of these books is acknowledged, and this listing must be regarded as sufficient return for the courtesy of the sender. Books that appear to be of particular interest will be reviewed as space permits. The *SAMJ* does not publish unsolicited reviews.

**Stroke Units: an Evidence Based Approach.**\* Edited by Peter Langhorne and Martin Dennis. Pp. xv + 112. £25. BMJ: 1998. ISBN 0-7279-1211-9.

**Older People at Home: Practical Issues.**\* Edited by Graham Mulley, Neil Penn and Eileen Burns. Pp. xii + 136. Illustrated. £16.95. BMJ: 1998. ISBN 0-7279-1258-5.

**Management of Acute and Chronic Pain.**\* Edited by Narinder Rawal. Series Editors Ronald M Jones, Alan R Aitkenhead and Pierre Fox. Pp. ix + 231. £25. BMJ: 1998. ISBN 0-7279-1193-7.

**Evidence Based Cardiology.**\* Edited by Salim Yusuf, John A Cairns, A John Camm, Ernest L Fallen and Bernard J Gersh. Pp. xxvi + 1123. £140. BMJ: 1998. ISBN 0-7279-1171-6.

**Management of Poisoning. A Handbook for Health Care Workers.**\* By J Henry and H Wiseman. Pp. xiv + 315. Illustrated. SwFr102/US\$91.80. WHO. ISBN 92-4-154481-3.

**Guidelines for Drinking-Water Quality. Volume 3: Surveillance and Control of Community Water Supplies.**\* Second edition. Pp. xii + 238. Illustrated. SwFr72/US\$64.80. WHO. ISBN 92-4-154503-8.

**Hysterectomy and Vaginal Repair.** Fourth Edition. By Sally Haslett and Molly Jennings. Pp. iv + 35. Illustrated. £3.95. Beaconsfield Publishers Ltd: 1998. ISBN 0-906584-46-9.

**Guidelines for Poison Control.**\* Pp. xii + 112. SwFr35/US\$31.50. WHO: 1997. ISBN 92-4-154487-2.

**Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever. Diagnosis, Treatment, Prevention and Control.**\* Second edition. Pp. viii + 84. SwFr26/US\$23.40. WHO: 1997. ISBN 92-4-154500-3.

**The World Health Report 1998. Life in the 21st Century: A Vision for All.**\* Pp. 230. SwFr17/US\$15.30. WHO: 1998. ISBN 92-4-156189-0.

**Handbook for Psychiatry for Primary Care.**\* Edited by C W Allwood and C A Gagiano. Pp. x + 326. R130. Oxford University Press: 1997. ISBN 0-19-571182-3.

**Paediatrics & Child Health. A Manual for Health Professionals in the Third World.**\* Edited by H M Coovadia and D F Wittenberg. Pp. xi + 713. R175. Oxford University Press: 1998. ISBN 0-19-571181-5.

**Culture and Common Mental Disorders in Sub-Saharan Africa.**\* Maudsley Monographs No. 41. By Vikram Patel. Pp. xv + 128. £24.95. Taylor & Francis: 1998. ISBN 0-86377-530-6.

**Phosgene.**\* Environmental Health Criteria No. 193. Pp. xvii + 70. SwFr21/US\$18.90. WHO: 1997. ISBN 92-4-157193-4.

**Demeton-S-methyl.**\* Environmental Health Criteria No. 197. Pp. xviii + 83. SwFr26/US\$23.40. Geneva: WHO: 1997. ISBN 92-4-157197-7.

**Diazinon.**\* Environmental Health Criteria No. 198. Pp. xx + 140. SwFr30/US\$27. WHO: 1998. ISBN 92-4-157198-5.