

## Book review

**Beckwith, S., and Franklin, P.** (eds) 2011: *Oxford handbook of prescribing for nurses and allied health professionals*, Second edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Indexed. 491 pp, price: £22.95 paperback. ISBN: 978-0-19-957581-7

This new edition, written by practising nurses, with contributions from a pharmaceutical adviser and a specialist in sexual health, covers a wide range of non-medical prescribing activities for practitioners at all levels.

The pocket-sized book is described as “patient-centred, evidence-based, and in line with the latest guidelines”. It contains 18 chapters divided into five sections: *Introductions, Principles, Practice, Accountability and Responsibilities*. In addition, there are expansive lists of symbols and abbreviations, and a glossary. All chapters are individually referenced and most give suggestions for further reading. There is also a comprehensive index at the back of the book, as well as cross-referencing within the text. This makes a useful reference tool, as it is very easy to look up information on a selected topic.

It is now over two decades since limited prescribing rights for some nurses were introduced on to the policy agenda, and the first section, *Introduction*, charts the timeline for what is known today as non-medical prescribing. The section also provides a lucid account of the legal differences between prescribing, administering and dispensing of medication. Crucially, the codes of conduct and the standards of proficiency governing nurses and allied health professional prescribers are addressed.

Seven chapters are devoted to the second section, *Principles*, of prescribing. The first three are relatively short and explain supplementary prescribing, clinical management plans and the basic principles of pharmacology. Examples of clinical management templates are provided for teams that have full co-terminus access to

patient records, as well as for teams where the supplementary prescriber does not have such access. Spaces are also provided for individuals to make notes of their own examples of prescribing within the acute and primary care settings. A useful table of some of the common interactions between drugs and foods or herbs is presented in the pharmacology chapter and leads seamlessly to the next chapter, which focuses on *Potential and unwanted side effects*. The chapter on *Review* is necessarily lengthy as it addresses some pertinent issues such as medication reviews, ethics, risk management and learning from incidents.

The third section, *Practice*, explores the practicality of prescribing from history taking to using the British National Formulary before explaining prescribing for special groups, for example older people, neonates and children. Separate chapters are devoted to specific medical conditions, some of which have useful reminders of the anatomy and physiology of the selected organ, for example the skin, eyes and ears. Complementary and alternative medicines (CAM) and over-the-counter drugs are given an overview together with some of the problems associated with CAM.

*Accountability* forms the fourth section and gives good bullet points on audit, cost-effective prescribing and clinical governance. A limitation of this section is its brevity on continuous professional development.

The final section, *Responsibilities*, could be misleading as it is concerned mainly with getting information and working outside the United Kingdom.

Although the book is small in size, the content is well cross-referenced, and in many instances further references are made to NICE, WHO, National Prescribing Centre and other major guidelines referencing bodies, as well as refereed clinical journals. A large number of references to relevant websites is provided, which will be useful for practitioners.

In summary, this is a very good book that I would recommend to all types of non-medical prescribing practitioners. It offers value for money, is comprehensive and will aid practitioners in managing medication for their patients.

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