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## BOOK REVIEWS

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Dennis H. Tootelian and Ralph M. Gaedeke, *Essentials of Pharmacy Management*. St. Louis, MO: Mosby-Year Book, Inc., 1993. xxi + 405 pp. \$37.95 (hardcover).

A management text specifically addressing a broad range of topics that relate to pharmacy practice is always a welcome addition to the libraries of both academicians and practitioners. This is such a text. Its appearance is timely, as the need to understand the management principles today is vital, due to the economic and environmental changes in the marketplace affecting pharmacy practice. The need for basic management skills has never been greater as the pharmacist's role evolves with pharmaceutical care in an increasingly competitive climate for small business.

*Essentials of Pharmacy Management*, as we read in the foreword, attempts to achieve this goal. It is written by two professors of marketing whose pharmacy credentials are unknown or, at least, not documented. Indeed, the text contains numerous illustrations and references to a previously published text on small business written by the same authors. One cannot but wonder if they are really interested in pharmacy practice management or simply seizing a marketing opportunity.

The book is organized into four parts: "Management in Perspective," "Pharmacy Practice in Community and Hospital Settings," "The Planning and Organizing Process," and "Operating Processes." All of this is set out in twenty chapters. Each chapter is

introduced by an outline of the contents, key terms, and learning objectives. It concludes with a summary, questions for discussion, self-test review, and a case study with its own set of questions. The material is easy to read, covers the main points of each topic, but leaves one with the impression that management is nothing more than an endless series of lists. The text is liberally illustrated with figures and tables originating (for the most part) from the authors' previous text and the U.S. Small Business Administration and either "adapted" or "used with permission" for this text.

As the title implies, this text provides the "essentials" and would be a welcome asset in an introductory course that would augment the many lists, tables, and figures with a discussion on how and why the principles are implemented and used. This places an extra effort on both student and instructor.

Notwithstanding its shortcomings, *Essentials of Pharmacy Management* provides another approach to presenting the concepts and principles required to manage a pharmacy practice.

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Patrick N. Catania and Martin M. Rosner, eds., *Home Health Care Practice*, 2nd ed. Palo Alto, CA: Health Markets Research, 1994. viii + 343 pp. \$60.00 (hardcover).

The second edition of Catania and Rosner's *Home Health Care Practice* provides an excellent introduction to home care for pharmacy students and for practicing pharmacists who wish to learn more about this emerging sector of the health-care market. Although the title suggests that the book's focus is specific to home care pharmacists, several chapters provide information that will appeal to pharmacists in other practice areas as well. Such topics range from the special needs of the diabetic patient to the provision of sterile supplies.

The book is divided into three sections that address different

aspects of home health care practice. The first section provides general information on each of nine topics including an introduction to home care, reimbursement, legal issues, quality assurance, drug information, special needs of the elderly patient, assisting caregivers in the home, hospice services, and pharmaceutical care. Most of the discussions provided in this section are rudimentary, but necessary for students or practitioners with little experience in the home care arena.

The strongest material in the book is found in Section Two, which discusses home medical equipment and supply services in depth, including diagnostic agents, ostomy supplies, and home medical equipment (HME). This section also provides basic information for pharmacists on urinary incontinence, needs of the diabetic patient, respiratory care, and the treatment of pressure sores. This type of information is rarely covered in other pharmacy texts and therefore is extremely valuable to home care pharmacists. Pharmacists practicing in other areas will also find much of this information useful whether they provide HME directly or are simply involved in referring patients to other providers of such products.

The final section of the book addresses home infusion therapies, including how to establish such a service, infusion pumps and IV access devices, concepts of parenteral and enteral nutrition, drug therapy for the treatment of patients with AIDS, and basic discussions of home chemotherapy and antibiotic infusions. Readers with prior knowledge of home infusion therapy may question the level of familiarity of some of the authors with providing such services themselves. For example, one author lists tocolytic therapy, growth hormones, and colony stimulating factors as "future therapies" although they have been provided for several years by many home infusion companies. In addition, one of the most important components of a home care pharmacy service—the provision of clinical monitoring of home infusion therapies—receives only minimal attention. Those readers interested in actually providing home infusion therapy services should consult other sources to supplement the information provided here.

The text has some other notable weaknesses regarding quality assurance and improvement, standards of practice, and accreditation standards. However, the text does provide a relatively thorough

overview of an extremely complex and comprehensive subject and the editors are to be commended for drawing this spectrum of information together in a much-needed text.

This reviewer feels that the book will be especially valuable to educators who wish to incorporate basic information on home care equipment and supplies and home infusion therapy into existing or new courses for pharmacy students at all levels. Hopefully, the availability of this text will serve to increase the exposure of faculty members, students, and practitioners alike to this growing and extremely satisfying area of pharmacy practice too long ignored by many schools and colleges of pharmacy.

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Michael C. Gerald, *The Poisonous Pen of Agatha Christie*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1993. xii + 276 pp. \$32.50 (cloth).

The name of Agatha Christie is famous wherever detective stories are read; indeed, she is said to be the most widely read English-language author of all time. But how many of her readers know how prolific a writer she was, and what a well-informed background supported her writing?

Agatha Christie began writing detective stories during the First World War, and continued to do so until the end of her long life in 1976. During the War, she took first aid classes and served as a nurse. She passed the Apothecary Hall examination and became a dispenser at a Red Cross Hospital; during World War II, she again acted as a dispenser, at University College Hospital, London. Her knowledge of drugs and poisons was extensive and detailed, and naturally she made much use of this knowledge in her novels and plays.

Michael Gerald, a professor of pharmacology and associate dean of pharmacy at Ohio State University, has studied Christie's works

in great detail, with a particularly knowledgeable eye for poisons, and he has now recorded an analysis of the sixty or so novels, and about twenty short stores. What poisons did she use? How were they administered? How were they detected? What did the victims experience? How often was poisoning attempted by health professionals—doctors and nurses—and, most intriguing, what glimpses do we get of Christie's view of these professionals?

Avid readers of Christie's novels will find this book a valuable resumé of all the absorbing cases of Hercule Poirot and Jane Marple. More occasional readers will delight to know of stores which they have perhaps heard of but never actually found for themselves. Literary critics may be enlightened to have a pharmacologist's eye view of the technical aspects of poisoning. Students and practitioners may be alerted to subtly suspicious activities of some client or customer and nip a nefarious plan in the bud. And anyone rashly mediating on the disposal of an unwanted person is likely to be deterred when he or she sees how improbable it is that such disposal will remain undetected.

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*A medical graduate of the University of Oxford, Dr. Miles Weatherall, has been Professor of Pharmacology at the London Hospital Medical College and a Director at the Wellcome Research Laboratories at Beckenham near London. He has served as a Privy Council nominated member of the Council of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and as a member of the British Medicines Commission. After retiring, he wrote a widely acclaimed account of the history of the discovery of drugs ("In Search of a Cure"), and is now engaged in other studies of medical history. —Ed.*

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