This 2003 Mosby's Drug Consult seems exceptionally interesting. The new edition encompasses many improvements and important features compared to the previous editions. The alphabetical listing, which includes disease/symptom categories, indications and brand names, is very comprehensive and addresses not only almost any situation that is faced by practicing primary care physicians but also those conditions seen by various specialists in the surgical and medical specialties. Having generic names, brand names and disease entities or symptoms under one category of indexing will facilitate information-seeking and avoids the need to go to a different indexing session each time. The colorful section on drug identification is a real plus. However, it requires continuous updating and it is impossible to include all existing medications. Although not all brands have easily identifiable marks, the colored guide is useful in identifying key situations, particularly overdoses. Under these circumstances, a quick look may provide a clue about medicines ingested and facilitate clinical management.

The most interesting section is the drug information consult. This section includes very comprehensive data on every single product available in the market. It seems that numerous pages of extensive information have been shortened, summarized and presented in few pages that are user-friendly. However, the clinical pharmacology heading in most cases seems to be too long, and could be shortened to suit most busy clinicians. References could be made to the most important articles in the literature relevant to the pharmacologic profile. The description provides some useful physical features of the material but it could be briefer. The clinical studies headings are well presented in such a way that they provide considerable insight not only for practitioners but also for researchers and medical investigators. This part is well updated and takes into consideration most current guidelines and clinical indications. The heading on adverse drug reactions and overdoses may need future upgrading and improvement, since some information appears not to be consistent with current guidelines. Many new adverse reactions might appear. There is a need also for updates on the management of acute intoxications.

Utilization of herbal therapeutics has increased during the past few years, and most textbooks on the market do not present information based on clinical evidence. The inclusion of a complete section on herbal therapeutics is an excellent feature. The consult includes clinical studies with relevant references, and some attention has been paid to evidence-based medicine. The material on warnings, precautions, drug interactions and adverse drug reactions with herbal medicine products appears to be thin. This may give a false impression that these products are safe. Probably, it would be wise to emphasize that not enough information is available to prove adverse reactions. However, this does not preclude the possibility of such effects. The inclusion of references in the herbal supplement information is extremely useful and will help the practicing doctors to go back to the original articles. Although this section does not include all the herbal products available on the US market, most of the commonly utilized products are well discussed and presented.

The comparative table gives the clinicians some clue during real-life scenarios and while practicing in primary care settings. The information is concise and user-friendly. Probably, it would be useful to keep this information on separate cards that could be kept in every clinic and provide enough support for a quick consult.

The childhood immunization and adult immunization sections provide very useful information for practitioners.

The compatibility table appears very complex and is difficult to extract detailed information from. Normal laboratory values are quite useful, and the values included match current guidelines.

The inclusion of the CD is a real improvement. The CD is well designed to include all the data and text material. This 2003 edition will be extremely valuable to practicing physicians as well as other health care professionals.

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