Book Review

General practice: The integrative approach

Kerryn Phelps and Craig Hassed*


General Practice: The Integrative Approach is a contemporary colossus of Australian textbooks of general practice. For GPs wanting a wide-ranging general practice reference, then the first edition of the General Practice: The Integrative Approach is one of the most current of the major textbooks and one which is highly relevant to general practice in Australia. It is also a textbook aware of international differences, issues and resources in general practice. Published late 2010, the first edition of General Practice: The Integrative Approach contains a table of Contents, list of Contributors, list of Reviewers, a Foreword by Professor Michael Kidd AM (President-Elect, World Organization of Family Doctors), a Preface, Acknowledgements, seven main Parts, 62 Chapters, an Appendix, a list of Picture Credits, and a comprehensive Index. Each chapter is referenced, but there is no glossary or list of abbreviations. The textbook is presented with in full colour throughout. Weighing in at over 3 kg, it is likely to stay close to the library shelf or office desk. Nonetheless, as with many other “Student Consult” titles, purchase of the textbook gives access to the online edition, which is very useful and makes the textbook highly portable, especially for students and registrars.

General Practice: The Integrative Approach in include “Part 1 Principles of integrative medicine”, “Part 2 Principles of general practice”, “Part 3 Systems”, “Part 4 Men’s health”, “Part 5 Women’s health”, “Part 6 Lifecycle health”, and “Part 7 Social conditions”. It targets important integrative aspects, such as behaviour change strategies and spirituality, as well as the common general practice conditions. It is hard to find a gap, unless specialised aspects of health are considered, such as homeless health, but it may have been an oversight not to include a named section on rural and remote practice. By far the largest section is “Systems” (509 pages), which indicates that this textbook provides an excellent grounding in the clinical issues relevant to general practice. It is a comprehensive textbook in this field. Its main shortcoming is its size and readers, especially students and registrars, may need to turn to a companion handbook, such as John Murtagh’s General Practice Companion Handbook, reviewed previously,2 or perhaps the authors of the present work can be encouraged to produce their own companion handbook.

Both authors are well known general practitioners and sometime media celebrities. Professor Kerryn Phelps, MBBS (Syd), FRACGP, FMA, will be best known for her election as the first female President of the Australian Medical Association, as well as her public commentary on many public health issues. She is currently President of the Australasian Integrative Medicine Association and Conjoint Professor, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales, and Adjunct Professor at the University of Sydney Medical School. Dr Craig Hassed, MBBS, FRACGP, is Senior Clinical Lecturer and Deputy Head, Department of General Practice, Monash University, Melbourne. He also is a public health commentator and medical writer, as well as being heavily involved as a founding board member of the Australasian Integrative Medicine Association.

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The production of the first edition of the General Practice: The Integrative Approach is a credible effort. The cost is not prohibitive considering its size, comprehensive nature and full colour quality production. Although it
has little competition in the field of integrative general practice, the textbook will compete head to head with major established works in the field, such as John Murtagh’s General Practice fifth edition by John Murtagh also published 2010.3 None-the-less, General Practice: The Integrative Approach is highly likely to establish itself in the exclusive international portfolio of major reference textbooks in general practice.

References


Declaration of Interests

The reviewer contributed one chapter to this textbook (Chapter 45 Travel Medicine).

Reviewer: Peter A. Leggat, MD, PhD, DrPH, FAFPHM, FACTM, FACRRM, Professor and Deputy Head, School of Public Health, Tropical Medicine and Rehabilitation Sciences, James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland, Australia. Email: peter.leggat@jcu.edu.au