

General practice: The integrative approach

Kerryn Phelps and Craig Hassed*

* 1st edn, xxxiii + 993 pp, hardcover with illustrations, ISBN13: 978-0-7295-3804-6, Sydney, Churchill Livingstone, RRP: AUD150, 2010.

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. None-the-less, 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 is primarily aimed at general practitioners, registrars and students working in general practice. This is a huge potential market. In 2009-2010, the Australian Government estimated that there were 26,613 general practitioners (GPs) in the country,¹ without consideration of the number of registrars and students in the field. It is important that the sub-title "*The Integrative Approach*" does not deter prospective readers, as it is simply a textbook looking at all facets of evidence-based general practice. The textbook is consistent in its presentation, which is a remarkable effort given it is a first edition. The main Parts are colour coded at the top of the page, which helps the reader find the relevant Part that they are looking for. The incorporation of extensive pictures, boxes, tables, and figures is helpful. There is a missed opportunity to put information on the major general practice emergencies on the inside front and back covers, which might be useful to consider in a following edition.

The main Parts of *General Practice: The Integrative Approach* 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.

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.

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*

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2. Murtagh J. *John Murtagh's General Practice Companion Handbook*. 4th edn. Sydney: McGraw Hill, 2007. (Reviewed *J Mil Vet Health* 2008; 17: 30-31)
3. Murtagh J. *John Murtagh's General Practice*. 5h edn. Sydney: McGraw Hill, 2010.