



Book Reviews

Medical Information on the Internet – A Guide for Health Professionals

Author: Robert Kiley
Published by: Churchill Livingstone, 133 pp; 1 × CD.
ISBN 0 443 056994

Why should one buy a guide book about the Internet, when all the information about the Net is anyway freely available?

I was educated in a paperbased culture so it came natural to me, to consult a book to learn about how to use the Internet when I started about 3 years ago. This is an experience I share with many of my friends.

This book is about how to get what you want, without spending hours on browsing through irrelevant information.

For me, this book fulfills the intentions of the author to help his readers to develop the necessary skills to tap into the vast quantities of information available via the Internet. The book is very useful for medical professionals with little time and limited computer literacy. Not everybody is a born mouse handler. The technical advice given is particularly helpful for beginners.

A good layout provided by an information access specialist is something one expects. This book is a very positive example of how well structured contents allow quick access to a particular bit of information, without having to read the whole book.

By providing lots of examples and analysis of websites the readers thoughts are stimulated and by browsing through these sites the underlying principles of the Internet are very quickly absorbed.

With its handy format and the enclosed CD I find this book very helpful. I have paid more for much less useful information in the past.

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Low Back Pain

Author: LP Seimon
Publishers: Demos Vermande, 352pp.
ISBN 0 939957 40 X \$119.00

One's first impression of this book is that it is a loosely written, readable, well produced and well illustrated *vade mecum*, emphasising basic principles and suitable for a medical school or physiotherapy department library. Seen from this point of view the first four or five chapters are, on the whole, sound. Increasingly, however, it then becomes repetitive and discursive, culminating in detailed illustrated presentations of over 80 of the author's cases in the guise of a clinical quiz. There is a lack of balance—the separate chapter devoted to children and teenagers is largely unnecessary yet makes no reference to adolescent disc protrusion as a separate entity, and the chapter on back pain in the elderly is superfluous. Illustrations are repeated two and even three times in different sections. Where the author sticks to established fact he is sound, but where he enters the realms of his own opinions he is less convincing, while there are erroneous statements, eg 'The indications for chemonucleolysis are no different from those (for) discectomy...'

In response to the criticism of the first edition the author has introduced a 'Bibliography and suggested reading' at the end of each chapter, but the references are never mentioned in the text. This book could be a useful teaching tool but it is one man's view and should be read as such.

RG Pringle