

4. McEwen J, Cumming F. The quality and safety of traditional Chinese medicines [comment]. *Aust Prescr* 2003;26:130-1.

Further information

Medicines regulation and the TGA. Canberra: Therapeutic Goods Administration; 2004.

<http://www.tga.gov.au/docs/html/medregs.htm> [cited 2004 Nov 8]

The Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods

Requests for searches and reports Phone 1800 010 624

<http://www.tga.gov.au/docs/html/artg.htm> [cited 2004 Nov 8]

Conflict of interest: none declared

Self-test questions

The following statements are either true or false (answers on page 165)

5. The Therapeutic Goods Administration routinely evaluates the quality, safety and efficacy of all new products listed on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods.
6. Complementary medicines are not regulated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Book review

Pocket guide to chest X-rays. G. Briggs.

Sydney: McGraw-Hill Australia; 2004.

172 pages. Price \$32.95 including GST*

Lindy Viviers, Senior Resident Medical Officer, Division of Medicine, John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle, NSW

For a quick revision of the basics of chest X-ray interpretation, as well as some more advanced tips, 'Pocket guide to chest X-rays' by Greg Briggs is a useful addition to the clinician's library. The guide begins with a summary of the major radiological modalities and their indications in practice. It explains the techniques of chest radiography in easily understood prose with accompanying diagrams. This is followed by a section on radiological anatomy and a thorough description of normal chest X-rays and variants. It thus offers the reader the chance to consolidate their knowledge of 'the norm' with which to compare abnormal X-rays presented in the remainder of its pages.

The book endeavours to be a practical guide to be used as an adjunct to a physician's practice. It outlines a systematic checklist with which to approach all chest X-rays and this is probably one of its foremost strengths. The bulk of the book is a collection of actual chest X-rays that showcase the common pathologies which clinicians encounter. For a large majority of students and trainees a picture can speak a thousand words and this book offers approximately 50 X-rays of conditions seen in everyday practice. The descriptions of these are straightforward and easy to follow. A noteworthy inclusion is a list of common pitfalls in interpreting chest X-rays, at least one or two of which the honest clinician will recognise.

The appendices are also worth mentioning. One is devoted to various signs in thoracic radiology, which, while being very detailed in its descriptions, would probably be more useful if

accompanied by the actual radiological pictures. Nonetheless, a number of these signs are referred to in the body of the book and it is a matter of looking them up. The second appendix is simply a quick reference list of causes and differential diagnoses commonly encountered by doctors. The last is an alphabetical list of syndromes particularly relevant to chest radiology, some of which are more recognisable than others, and would probably spur a number of us to revisit our textbooks.

This guide's main use is as a reference in the context of patient care, however the medical student would find it invaluable as a learning tool as well. On the whole this is an easy, informative read that encapsulates a rather enormous area of medicine into a concise, manageable whole.

* *Australian Prescriber* readers are offered 15% discount by McGraw-Hill Australia (phone (02) 9900 1806 or email cservice_sydney@mcgraw-hill.com and quote code BCX15).

Book review policy

Publishers sometimes ask *Australian Prescriber* to review their books, CDs and web sites. The Editorial Executive Committee considers these requests according to *Australian Prescriber's* book review policy:

1. Books are reviewed if they are likely to be of interest to readers of *Australian Prescriber*. Not all books are reviewed.
2. Reviewers are selected according to their areas of expertise.
3. Reviewers must declare any conflicts of interest.
4. Reviewers are not paid, but may keep the review copy.
5. Book reviews may be edited.
6. Not all reviews are published.
7. No payments or commissions are accepted for these reviews from publishers.