

ARTICLE

Safe prescribing of opioids

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FURTHER READING

Bird S. Prescribing Schedule 8 drugs. *Aust Fam Physician* 2006;35:59-60.

Book review

Introduction to pharmaceutical calculations. 3rd ed.

Louis Roller

Honorary associate professor
Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical sciences
Monash University
Melbourne

Rees JA, Smith I, Smith B.

London: Pharmaceutical Press; 2011. 245 pages.

Price: \$76, members of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia \$59

The third edition of this British book, written by pharmacy educators, is an introduction to drug dosage and other pharmaceutical calculations. Each chapter contains learning objectives, numerous worked examples, sample questions and answers. It also includes new chapters on accuracy of measurement and updated worked examples.

However, I have reservations about its usefulness for Australian pharmacy students. I can envisage Australian pharmacy students, who come with high levels of mathematics skills, becoming quite annoyed at the rather simplistic content.

Most pharmacy schools have pharmaceutical calculations taught and assessed over the four years of the course and there are further assessments by the Pharmacy Board of Australia as part of pharmacists' registration examinations during their internship year.

This book also suffers from significant omissions, such as pharmacokinetic and clinical calculations that are relevant to modern-day pharmacy practice. Many of the examples are antiquated and the use of chloroform water (which appears in many examples) is banned in Australia. Again, in the Australian context, devoting a chapter on converting degrees Fahrenheit to Celsius and vice versa is probably irrelevant.

I cannot recommend this book as a text for pharmacy students in Australia.