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Book review

Therapeutic Guidelines: Rheumatology, Version 1.

Melbourne: Therapeutic Guidelines Limited; 2006. 314 pages. Price: \$39, students \$25.30, plus postage

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The first edition of *Therapeutic Guidelines: Rheumatology* is a welcome addition to this series. The pocket-sized published version is well formatted and covers a broad spectrum of rheumatic complaints. In general, it provides clear, accurate and practical information.

The first chapter on 'Getting to know your drugs' is contemporary and succinct. It includes detailed information on analgesics, corticosteroids and disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (especially the biologically active treatments), and many of the commonly used complementary medicines frequently taken or asked about by patients with musculoskeletal complaints.

As expected, there are chapters outlining the evaluation and management of common rheumatic disorders such as

rheumatoid arthritis, gout and autoimmune connective tissue diseases. Regarding the book's format, I particularly liked the way that topics are presented by pattern of arthritis (for example, recent onset arthritis) and regional pain. For a general practitioner, patients usually present with an undifferentiated symptom pattern rather than a clearly established diagnosis so the book may help the doctor navigate through the period of initial care until a clear diagnosis becomes apparent.

There are also very good sections on the assessment and management of spinal pain, and the care of musculoskeletal conditions in children, adolescents and pregnant women.

My only criticism of this publication is that some sections are textbook-like in their detail which somewhat diminishes the value of this book as a quick and easy therapeutic guideline for busy practitioners. A brief description with diagrams on the intra-lesional injection techniques for common conditions such as rotator cuff tendinitis would improve its appeal to general practitioners.

In summary, the first edition of *Therapeutic Guidelines: Rheumatology* comes with my strong recommendation as a useful resource for many practitioners in the assessment and management of a broad range of musculoskeletal conditions.