

Book review by Celeste Skardis, DOM
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Integrated Pharmacology: Combining Modern Pharmacology with Chinese Medicine by Dr. Greg Sperber with Bob Flaws Blue Poppy, 2007

First of all, I would like to thank Bob Flaws for his untiring research and subsequent production of excellent books regarding all aspects of Oriental medicine. He has contributed greatly to the furthering of Oriental medicine.

This book being reviewed now is no exception to that excellent track record. In fact, it has integrated pharmacology and Oriental medicine together in such a brilliant and easy manner as to enhance the practice of any Oriental medicine practitioner.

To show you what I mean, let me start out by telling you about Dr. Sperber. He has a BS in molecular biology, a master's and a doctorate in traditional Oriental medicine from Pacific College of Oriental Medicine, an MBA with an emphasis in healthcare, and the British equivalent of an MD. He has an acupuncture and herbal private practice, teaches and is a clinical supervisor of TCM, was a department chair of TCM, and is now president of the California State Oriental Medical Association.

Next, this book includes a lot of information, yet it is so easy (*to use, it is well worth the*) price of admission.

Throughout the chapters, any Western medical terminology utilized is defined right on the page in focused, specific boxes.

There are three appendices and six indices, including a generic drug index, a brand name index, a drug group index, a conditions and procedures index, and an herb and supplement index. Spectacular

So, with the name of the drug your patient is taking, it is easy to look up the actions and effects and any toxic interactions with herbs, and also any toxicities of the drugs themselves. What a wonderful contribution to integrative medicine.

For example, I thought of tetracycline. I looked it up in the general index. There were several pages to go to. I chose the first page listed in the general index. On the page referenced I found a general and specific discussion of antimicrobials, including their effects on the many conditions a patient could have concurrent with a bacterial infection. Also, there was a chart of human fetal risk to antimicrobials. Valuable information continued on the next several pages,

including concise discussions of drug resistance, types of bacteria and antibiotic agents, and combinations and complications.

Then I looked up zizyphus. It says that Suan Zao Ren may increase the sedative and hypnotic effects of barbiturates and may reverse the effects of caffeine (and cited the research).

The only thing I can think of that would be better for us regarding this book would be if it was bound with a flexible spiral binding and had chapter tabs. Then it would be easier to physically navigate the pages. The industry standard is to publish a hardcover first. However, even though it was a hardbound copy, it stayed open easily.

This excellent tome would be a valuable addition to any Oriental medicine practitioner's reference library. I recommend it highly.