This is the 9th edition of Daily Drug Use, published by the Western Cape Branch of the Pharmaceutical Society, the first edition having been published in 1981. I have been in general practice for many years, and am embarrassed to admit to not having used this book in the past.

The book is predominantly an almanac of drugs available in South Africa and lists all the potential drug interactions, plus the risks of drug use in pregnancy, breastfeeding and porphyria. It is clearly laid out, and both generic and brand names are used where possible. The book is a useful cross-reference if you have a patient who may be using one or more chronic medications and want to add another medication for acute or chronic use.

Currently, many patients are taking chronic medication prescribed by a variety of doctors for a range of problems such as hypertension, hyperlipidaemia, HIV disease and psychotropic conditions. Often these doctors do not communicate with one another, and they may therefore not be aware what prescription medications their patient is taking. Additionally, we are told that iatrogenic disease, including adverse drug reactions, occurs in more than 10% of patients.

With adverse outcomes increasingly leading to medical litigation, a prudent doctor needs to ask patients what other medicines they are taking and check in a reference source such as Daily Drug Use for possible interactions.

Unlike the South African Medicines Formulary (SAMF), which should be on every doctor’s desk, this book does not give the therapeutic indications or doses for drug use. It is, however, a useful adjunct to SAMF in helping to avoid problems arising from polypharmacy.

Daily Drug Use is a valuable reference text for pharmacists, particularly hospital pharmacists. It should be increasingly used by prescribing doctors who need to avoid problems of adverse drug reactions and interactions.

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