Food is Better Medicine Than Drugs: Your Prescription for Drug-Free Health

by Patrick Holford and Jerome Burne
Reviewed by Sandra Goodman PhD

Patrick Holford and Jerome Burne have linked up as the ultimate dream author team: Jerome Burne, the investigative medical journalist with expertise about the Pharmaceutical Industry, and Patrick Holford with his extensive expertise regarding Nutritional approaches for many health conditions.

This is an impressively large tome (>450 pages), featuring 37 pages of References, a Resource section and detailed Index, which make this title an invaluable clinical tool.

There is a veritable treasure trove of information regarding the workings of the Pharmaceutical Industry, how it is market-led, the billions of pounds representing drug sales, and how the very same Pharmaceutical Industry also oversees the funding of clinical trials and their regulatory bodies.

The book is comprised of Four Parts:

Part I The Truth About Drugs is a full expose of the Pharmaceutical Industry. This section is replete with shocking facts and figures, fully referenced to the published literature, illustrating the dark nature of the drug world.

One such cautionary fact is that the gastrointestinal side effects of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS), which include aspirin, result in the hospitalization of 12,000 people and 2,600 deaths in the UK annually. A brilliant Table entitled Anatomy of a Blockbuster sets out a page of bullet points about how to create a blockbuster drug. These include: that it has to be patentable, it doesn’t have to be better than anything already being used, just more effective than nothing (a placebo), it needs to treat a conditions that many people suffer with, and it should only treat symptoms, not cure them. Finally, it ought to be possible to keep increasing the number of patients it can be prescribed for, either by lowering the guideline criteria, or prescribing off-label (no need for trials to demonstrate effectiveness);

Part II A Different Way of Looking sets out a wide range of questionnaires to evaluate your current state of health, as well as constructive and healthy strategies for your overall wellness and improvement;

Part III Drugs vs Food as Medicine constitutes the major content of this title. Discussed are 8 of the most common conditions, including Diabetes, Menopause, Depression, Memory Loss, Anxiety and Insomnia, Pain, Asthma and Eczema, Heart Conditions and Attention and Learning problems.

These excellent chapters generally start off with an explanation of the conventional drugs, the different categories for each condition, how they work (biochemical pathways), their side effects (including death, as appropriate) as well as a brief self-help questionnaire for the reader to determine how urgently they may need help in this area. Then a range of nutritional remedies is presented, with evidence for their efficacy;

Part IV Changing the System looks at the background, politics and attacks upon non-drug medicine, the reality behind the evidence-based approach and a roadmap for the future of Nutritional and Natural Health approaches. This section presents many of the erroneous myths, false information dirty tricks as well as the precautionary principle ruling our lives with the EU Supplement Directive and Codex.

Positive Health readers are familiar with Nutritional Medicine and other Natural Health approaches. However, apart from GPs, many of us may not be fully conversant with the drugs being used to treat conditions, the different drug categories, their side effects, efficacy and their worth to the pharmaceutical companies. In the sections on Diabetes, Pain Killers, and Heart Conditions, the information regarding the different types of drugs, their side effects and lack of efficacy is salutary reading, and makes this book an obligatory addition to every thinking person’s library of Medicine and Natural Medicine titles.

With all the vicious attacks pounding every aspect of Complementary Medicine, including alleged low standards of practitioner training and alleged dearth of evidence for natural remedies, one would imagine that conventional medicine and drugs would be superior in every aspect. Far from it, when laid out side by side as in this book, one starts to realize that many of the tools of medicine don’t have a leg to stand on.

Well done Patrick Holford and Jerome Burne!

Buy this book, incorporate its advice into your personal health plan and strategy with dealing with your doctor. Then renew your commitment to fight for our right to retain access to the safer healing properties of nutritional medicine.

About the Reviewer

Sandra Goodman PhD is Editor, a Director and co-Founder of Positive Health Publications Ltd. Originally a PhD Research Molecular Biologist, she has for the past 20 years written 4 books on nutritional subjects, set up the Cancer and Nutrition Database for the Bristol Cancer Help Centre and since 1994 put together Positive Health magazine. She may be contacted via sandra@positive-health.com

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