

MEDIA REVIEWS

Stan Goldman, PhD, Contributing Editor

How To Stop Heartburn: Simple Ways to Heal Heartburn and Acid Reflux.

ANIL MINOCHA, MD, AND CHRISTINE ADAMEC. NEW YORK: JOHN WILEY & SONS, INC., 2001. 272 PP. \$14.95 (PAPERBACK).

How To Stop Heartburn is well written and addresses most of the questions that the lay public have about gastroesophageal reflux disease. The text is light and entertaining; the pathophysiology and medical terminology are nicely explained. I did not care, however, for the chapter on "Alternative Medicines and Treatments that May Help," which deals with acupuncture, aroma therapy, yoga, and herbal medications. These therapies are largely unproven and cannot be recommended for patients with gastroesophageal reflux disease. Medicine in the United States and Western Europe is evidence-based. I consider it improper for licensed physicians to recommend unproven therapy for illnesses that have excellent medical and surgical treatments. Another inadequate chapter is "When Surgery Is Needed to Heal Your Acid Reflux." This chapter is only seven pages long and does not begin to address indications for surgery, surgical techniques, and potential complications of surgery. I would have expanded this chapter to give a much more detailed description of surgical options for gastroesophageal reflux. This would have been helpful for the gastroenterologist and

internist because we spend many hours discussing this topic with patients who are considering the surgical option. I liked Part IV of the book: "Lifestyle Changes That Work." This section gives information that allows individuals to change their diet and habits to decrease gastroesophageal reflux disease. Patients with mild reflux will respond to these maneuvers without medication, decreasing the need to see a physician and take expensive medication.

—RICHARD A. WRIGHT, MD



Sober for Good: New Solutions for Drinking Problems - Advice from Those Who Have Succeeded.

ANNE M. FLETCHER. NEW YORK: HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY, 2001. 288 PP. \$25 (HARDBACK).

Anne M. Fletcher's book *Sober for Good: New Solutions for Drinking Problems - Advice from Those Who Have Succeeded* is an essential guide for anyone who has, or has recovered from, a problem with alcohol abuse. Through the experiences of 222 "masters," those who have overcome their problems with alcohol abuse, Fletcher illustrates the many ways in which to overcome drinking problems and how to stay sober once you quit. She has made her book accessible to any reader by including distinct headings, bullet points, and a useful appendix. The primary characteristic that separates this guide from the oceans of books

on alcohol abuse is the testimonies of the masters. For every lifestyle, from high-functioning drinkers to those who have hit bottom; for every method of recovery, from the traditional support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) to those who conquered drinking on their own; for every potential problem, from having champagne at a wedding to a full-blown relapse—there are masters who speak freely about how they overcame alcohol abuse.

Each of the 12 chapters in this book speaks directly to problem drinkers by asking questions like "Do you use alcohol as an escape from life and its problems?" (p. 32) and "Does alcohol instead of reason make your decisions?" (p. 33) or to their family and friends by saying "The worst thing you can do is nothing" (p. 153, Chapter 7, "You Can Help: The Masters' Advice to Family and Friends"). This straightforward approach is used throughout the book not only to cause those who have problems with alcohol abuse to realize how they have been changed by drinking, but also to give reassurance and motivation to those struggling to recover. Fletcher makes it clear that there are many roads to recovery, and each master can choose a different road (Chapter 2, "There's Not Just One Way: How the Masters Got Sober—and Stay Sober," and Chapter 6, "Be Your Own Expert: How Seven Different Masters Found Their Way with Seven Different Approaches"). She

gives examples from masters who used, among other methods, brief intervention, individual counseling, AA, Women for Sobriety, SMART (Self Management and Recovery Training), Secular Organizations for Sobriety (SOS), or formal treatment. One master relates, "It was trial and error. For me there weren't one or two 'just right' approaches" (p. 96), while another says, "AA works for me and works well" (p. 8). The point Fletcher emphasizes over and over again is that it doesn't matter what method you use to get sober as long as it works for you.

Perhaps the most useful aspects of the book are the numerous text boxes that summarize the most essential information in each chapter. These boxes discuss everything from what to do "Before You Quit" (p. 17) to "How the Masters Prevented Lapses from Becoming Relapses" (pp. 212-213). For example, in Chapters 4 and 10 these boxes give tips from the masters to those trying to recover from alcohol abuse (such as "Psyching Yourself Up: Tips from the Masters" [p. 65] and "How the Masters Handle Drink Pushers" [p. 233]). The boxes ask questions to those trying to quit (such as "A Wake-Up Call: Questions from the Masters" [pp. 32-33]). The boxes also list many guidelines for recovery (such as "The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous" [p. 110] and "SOS Suggested Guidelines for Sobriety" [p. 133]). For a reader who wants help and wants it fast, these gems contain vital information. The appendix, "A Consumer Guide to Recovery Options," also provides indispensable information on finding recovery groups, purchasing useful self-help books, and using the Internet to research recovery options.

Sober for Good is more than just a guide to sobriety; it provides a connection between those trying to recover and those who have been sober for 5 to 25 years (each master was sober for at least 5 years before the publication of the book). The book lets people struggling with sobriety know that their experience is similar to someone else's experience and that they are not alone in their struggle. Her book is also a useful tool for friends and family of those who have problems with alcohol abuse because it provides information so that they can better understand the problem and potential solutions. As someone who has had a lifetime of experience with alcohol abuse, I found *Sober for Good* both informative and inspiring.

—DANNA PEARSALL

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The Words of Medicine: Sources, Meanings, and Delights.

ROBERT FORTUINE. SPRINGFIELD, ILL.: CHARLES C THOMAS, 2001. 424 PP. \$84.95 (HARDCOVER).

Books of this size are not always enjoyable, but this one is. Dr. Robert Fortune "studied medicine at McGill [University] and public health at Harvard [University]. He and his wife live on a lakeshore about 50 miles north of Anchorage, Alaska." (Nowhere are his medical degrees mentioned.) His current titles include professor in the biomedical program at the University of Alaska at Anchorage and clinical professor of family medicine at the University of Washington. In 1990 he was named Alaska Historian of the Year for his book (one of many) *Chills and Fever: Health and Disease in the Early History of Alaska*. He is a medical historian of the first order.

The short biography inside the book also tells us that he has "relished the medical profession as a hospital administrator, diplomat, clinical teacher, medical historian, and editor." Plainly the author is a man of many gifts.

Fortune has written a monumentally scholarly book, one I found so delightful (the subtitle is accurate) that I was tempted to read this book in one sitting, an impossible aim.

The Words of Medicine was written as a resource for people interested in medicine. I had only to read the beautifully categorized contents, the surprisingly familiar bibliography, and the staggering index, and I was hooked. Each section is magnetic, leading the reader from one paragraph to the next and to the next.

Let's get the glitches and disagreements out of the way first, so that I can concentrate on what is really important.

In the index the word for itching is misspelled as "pruritis," but in the text it is spelled correctly, *pruritus*. The registry circle, ®, is used needlessly. The overlong paragraphs, some half a page, weary the eye. The important verb "Is," which should always be initial-capped in titles, is lowercase.

The venerable *Physicians' Desk Reference* is thus spelled correctly in the index but is misspelled on page 184, with the apostrophe in the wrong place. A rib-tickling section about strange diseases discusses such syndromes as jeans folliculitis, Club Med dermatitis, and jalaproctitis. However, I was disappointed that such disorders (described in a letter to the editor of *The New England Journal of Medicine*) as pursitis and congestive fart failure were not included. In the "cataloging-in-publication

data” section of the copyright page, the word “medicine” is misspelled. The term “lethologica”—the inability, usually temporary, to remember a word or your best friend’s name—does not appear. The book is poorly bound; the spine has already parted company with the body.

Fortuine’s objective stated in the introduction is plain, with good, clear words, like the rest of the book:

My goal is to help those whose lot it is to read, write and speak this particular *genre* of [medical] English in their daily lives to enjoy and appreciate something of its lasting heritage. And we are not referring here to a narrow and provincial technical jargon, but to what is fast becoming the common mode of medical communication throughout the Global Village.

The 26 chapters include “The Imagery of Medicine: The Carnival of the Animals”; “Latin Redivivus et Vivens: Medical Latin Then and Now”; “The French Connection: The Gallic Legacy”; “Some Practical Pointers”; and “Quo Vadis?” This last questioning chapter discusses, *inter alia*, the language of health insurance and managed care, medical euphemisms, and medical wit. The depth of each chapter can be gauged from the fact that Chapters 3 through 6 discuss in astonishing detail the “building blocks of our vocabulary”: medical prefixes, suffixes, verbs, and adjectives.

The index is 39 pages, so you anticipate right away that this will be a worthwhile book. As I’ve said many times, a book is only as good as its index. That’s especially true of a book containing thousands of terms and as detailed as this one.

Like any other conscientious medical editor, I read the bibliography carefully, and with green eyes. I also wanted to see how many of those books I had in my library. The number was gratifying. Imagine my delight to see listed the works of former and current AMWA members: Abraham Lass, Cheryl Iverson, Frank Netter, Edith Schwager. (There may be others.)

This is an eminently serious book but written with an elegant narrative style and a sense of whimsy that never intrudes. Fortuine has steeped himself in the origins of medical terms in both dead and living languages. Each page is a treasure, fascinating for any student or lover of the English language, not to mention Greek, Latin, and many other tongues. Here are excerpts. The boldface designates first mention of the term in a section.

Someone uncertain of his destination in Roman times might be termed *vagus* [Latin for

“wandering”], a fitting name for the wanderings of the tenth cranial, or **vagus nerve**.

A similar verb [that is, similar to *laleō*, “talk”] was *legō*, which is meant to “say,” “speak,” or “count,” and is responsible for all English words ending in **-ology** and the semihumorous word **logorrhea** (garrulousness).

The preposition *meta* had many meanings in Greek, including “between,” “in company with,” “besides,” “according to,” and “after.” . . . A very recent coinage is **meta-analysis**, a statistical technique that combines the results of several similar statistical studies. In this word the use of the prefix implies the meanings “after,” or perhaps “in company with.”

From the name of the river Lethe, from which the inhabitants drank to forget their past life, both the words **lethal** and **lethargy** are derived. . . . In 1806 a German chemist named Wilhelm Adam Sertürner (1783-1841) first isolated an alkaloid from opium and named it *morphineum* (later modified to *morphium*) in honor of Morpheus [the god of dreams]. In considering the strong analgesic property of this drug, now called either **morphine**, or sometimes **morphia**, it is easy to forget that it also effectively induces sleep. In the recent past, the word morphine has indirectly spawned a new class of neurotransmitters known as **endorphins**, which in effect are “internal morphines.”

The obliging author has even supplied pronunciation keys of foreign words, as well as transliteration and pronunciation tables of the Greek language. There are 26 tables in all.

That’s only scratching the surface.

The thousands of medical terms discussed include tachycardia, from *tachys*, “rapid” in Greek; the opposite, bradycardia, from *bradys*, “slow”; bradykinin (literally “slow mover”); and the words for surgical operations and surgical instruments ending in *-tome*—all of which contain the Greek root *temnō*, to cut or wound— anatomy, microtome, appendectomy, and lithotomy. “And of course, there is **atom**, a word that simply means ‘indivisible’ (literally ‘not cut’).” There are innumerable medical terms from French, German, Dutch, Italian, Norse, Portuguese, and Spanish to augment the basic Greek and Late, Medieval, and Modern Latin terms.

The Words of Medicine, written by a superlative writer with a dry sense of humor, is a wonderful, comprehensive, encyclopedic resource. It fulfills Robert

Fortune's noble purpose, and it deserves wide attention and readership. It is an education in itself. I loved this book.

—EDIE SCHWAGER



Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th edition.

WASHINGTON, DC: AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, 2001. 439 pp. \$23.95-\$34.95 (PRICE RANGE FOR THREE AVAILABLE BINDINGS).

The freshly minted fifth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (the fourth edition was released in 1994) offers some handy upgrades and features, not the least of which is the option to purchase the manual in three bindings: hardcover, softcover, and spiral. Many writers and editors are familiar with the frustrations of perfect binding, particularly when consulting a manual while trying to type simultaneously—the spiral binding is a wonderful solution.

The organization of the manual is largely the same, with some additions and expansions. The fifth edition offers an entire chapter devoted to references, with the exception of legal references, which are contained in an appendix. It would be more useful to keep all references together, broken down by type. The most (and greatly needed) attention in this area was spent on electronic references, with an abundance of new examples citing formats from software to e-mail messages to papers presented at virtual conferences.

The manual's running foot still contains the chapter name and section information but has been enhanced with the section number. The index has been expanded and is thorough, listing page numbers, section numbers, and cross-references to related topics. There is a useful section on avoiding bias, including tables indicating preferred language.

One of the most difficult topics style manual authors must address is assumptions about user knowledge and

writing ability. While expecting a fairly high level of English-language competence, the manual's authors provide myriad examples to show the rules in action. This is especially helpful when a single example is not sufficient to clearly illustrate a concept or multiple exceptions could confuse users. Although examples are often the best means to communicate a concept, sometimes too little explanation is provided about why something is the preferred expression (e.g., the general rule for expressing numbers less than 10 as words). Such explanation may help users who only occasionally consult the manual decide whether they want to follow the rule, and providing a rationale may help some people remember the rule.

In addition to the new features, many useful elements were retained from the previous edition. Notably, the use of different fonts helps the user distinguish a rule from an example—an excellent device for people who are searching for a quick answer. The manual also has retained cross-references between chapters using section numbers (e.g., the use of periods in abbreviations is explained in the abbreviation section but cross-referenced from the punctuation section). Even more helpful would be page numbers in addition to or in place of the section numbers.

The manual again offers an author checklist, covering everything from setting margins to citing references to abbreviation use. Of particular note: the checklist refers to various sections in the manual that explain policies and style guidelines in detail.

The APA also maintains a Web site (www.apastyle.org) that covers changes and updates to the *Publication Manual*, a practical feature for writers and editors who use the manual regularly.

—STACY L. CHRISTIANSEN



Stan Goldman, PhD, is grants manager at the Center for Advanced Medicine, Jewish Hospital Heart & Lung Institute, Louisville, Ky.