

Book and Media Reviews

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Trauma, Fifth Edition

Moore E, Feliciano D, Mattox K
McGraw-Hill Professional, 2003
1,469 pages, \$195.00
ISBN 0-07-137069-2

In a world where 9/11, suicide bombings, and armed conflict are becoming more common and where traumatic accidents remain the number one cause of death in the population aged 1 to 44 years old, trauma remains a cornerstone of emergency care. In a time when one never knows what type of injury will walk in the door, a general reference on traumatic injuries is a must in every emergency department. In *Trauma*, the editors provide an extensive reference for all types of trauma, from initial assessment through rehabilitation.

Regarded as the decisive text on trauma, the fifth edition of *Trauma* continues to build on past successes. Topics touched on in this text range from basic primary survey information to specialized spinal care to rehabilitation of the trauma patient. There are chapters that cover the epidemiology of trauma, the history of trauma, and injury prevention. This manual, weighing in at more than 1,400 pages, has long been considered the definitive textbook reference for all trauma-related questions; the most recent edition is no exception.

New features of this edition center on the summaries and commentary provided at the end of each chapter. These "summaries," which serve primarily as an editorial platform

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for the authors, are interesting; they provide some perspective on the issues that the giants of trauma surgery consider important. In addition, chapters have been added on trauma ultrasonography and the molecular pathophysiology of trauma. For a textbook, the information appears to be remarkably up to date. Controversial issues, such as the use of steroids in blunt spinal trauma, are dealt with by presenting both sides.

In an attempt to not make the volume too large, references were consciously limited by the editors; even so, it appears that there is very little that has been left out of this decidedly complete text. Despite the breadth of knowledge contained here, there are some topics covered in surprisingly little depth. For example, the 2-page section on bioterrorism is woefully inadequate. The pages that discuss radiation exposure are both incomplete and difficult to find. For topics that go hand in hand with traumatic disease and would be expected to be found in the next major terrorist attack, the short shrift they get in this text seems inappropriate.

Lastly, considering the integral part that emergency physicians play in the management and care of trauma patients, there is shockingly little mention of anyone other than surgeons caring for trauma patients. Although there is the brief mention of advanced trauma life support courses preparing "the surgical community" for the generalities of trauma, no credit is given to a team approach to trauma or acknowledgment to our specialty for being the first line of trauma care. Possibly, this deficit is recognized by the superficiality with which certain topics are covered, such as bioterrorism, heat-related illnesses, or radiation exposure; the thought may be that with good emergency physicians around, these issues will have been addressed before the surgeon gets involved.

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Mobile Physician's Desk Reference

Thomson PDR
Thomson Medical Economics, 2003
Free to health care providers

Tarascon Pocket Pharmacopoeia

Green SM, ed

Tarascon Publishing, 2003
\$29.95 (1-year subscription)
ISBN 1-882742-27-3

PEPID for Palm 4.3

Rosenbloom M, Bois RT

PEPID, 2003
\$139.95 (1-year subscription)
ISBN 0-971292159

As an emergency physician, finding relevant, timely medical information from the past can be challenging while working. Today, with a personal digital assistant (PDA) and cutting-edge software, this information is readily accessible. This review looks at 3 such software programs: the *Mobile Physician's Desk Reference*, *Tarascon Pocket Pharmacopoeia*, and *PEPID for Palm 4.3*.

Mobile Physician's Desk Reference for Palm is the PDA version of the 10-lb *Physician's Desk Reference*,¹ a benchmark for drug information which, up to now, has not been very portable. The palm version requires 3,684 KB of memory and provides the user with several important drug references. This includes not only a drug database, but also a drug interaction tool and a nice feature entitled "What's New," which keeps the user up to date on new US Food and Drug Administration drug approval information. This program's strength is its reliability, accuracy, and ease of use. However, more generalized reference material, including the mechanism of action and price of medications, is not available.

Tarascon Pharmacopoeia, like the *Mobile Physician's Desk Reference*, has a quick and easy-to-use drug reference and does contain the mechanism of action and cost of medications. In addition, *Tarascon for Palm* also contains a significant amount of medical information. On the program's main page, quick links allow the viewer to access many other useful resources, including medical calculators, a list of drugs by class, and a tools section. The tools section unveils an incredibly extensive resource to the emergency physician, with links to adult emergency drugs, the cardiac dysrhythmia protocols, pediatric normal values, and overdose antidotes to name just a few. Additional information can be found broken down within broad categories, such as neurology, dermatology, and hematology, and is easy to access and use from the toolbar menu. The program's icons are quite useful in navigating within the program and can be found at the top of every page. However, I did think that the

"find" function (denoted by a magnifying glass) would be more useful if it functioned independently of the index and could search the entire Tarascon program.

PEPID for Palm 4.3 was the third and most extensive in this series of PDA programs evaluated. *PEPID* requires 6.2 MB of palm memory, almost 2 times the size of the other 2 programs reviewed here, but covers 1,700 conditions and topics in emergency medicine. This program, like the *Tarascon Pharmacopoeia*, has permanent icons on the screen that are useful for quickly accessing information. *PEPID's* icons lead the viewer to multiple windows, including a "find" function, table of contents, quick reference, enumerable medical calculators, and an acute care reference that is similar to the *Tarascon Pharmacopoeia's*, but much more extensive and styled as bulleted points.

Features unique to *PEPID for Palm 4.3* include the sheer volume of information available, all separated into succinct points. It contains a wealth of medical calculators, equations, and conversions, as well as a variety of useful eponyms, normal laboratory values, step-by-step procedures, and a quick reference dermatome and vision chart. *PEPID* also contains unique specialty information on topics such as coding and billing, nuclear/biochemical weapons, ultrasonography, and transplant medicine. Despite *PEPID's* many fine points, there is one drawback to consider—the size of the program. This can be mitigated by use of a memory card, but this will slow down the program's function.

The 3 palm programs reviewed are an excellent means for emergency physicians to have everything from current relevant drug information to more extensive text-like data. We work in an advancing technological and medical era with an ever-increasing wealth of knowledge. In the emergency department, this information is important to have at the touch of a button.

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1. Medical Economics Staff. *Physician's Desk Reference*. 57th ed. Montvale, NJ: Thomson Healthcare; 2002.

Pediatric Emergency Medicine: Just the Facts

Strange GR, Ahrens WR, McQuillen KK, et al

McGraw-Hill Professional, 2003
512 pages, \$54.95
ISBN 0-07-140086-9