



Book Review



Massage Therapy and Medications

By Randal S. Persad, Dip. Pharm., R.M.T., 2001 (Curties-Overzet Publications, Toronto, 1-888-649-5411

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Reviewed by Alan Jordan

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Massage programs typically train students to conduct a personable but somewhat limited client interview. The main goals of the interview are to develop rapport with the client, determine client needs and assess any contraindications that may be present. With the publication of Randal Persad's new book, *Massage Therapy and Medications*, the industry norm of the client interview is about to make a radical change.

As a massage therapy instructor, I often receive massages from students. During the client interview from a beginning student, I answer honestly that I take Lotensin for high blood pressure when asked about medications or medical conditions. I am amazed at how often the student therapist looks a little uncomfortable and says something like "Oh, okay," and then moves to another topic. For a first quarter student, this results in a learning experience about how to expand on the interview and acquire a better understanding of the condition.

Unfortunately, I have too often experienced a similar reaction during a client

interview by a professional therapist. I am concerned that many massage therapists really do not know what to do with information concerning a client's medication(s). After reading *Massage Therapy and Medications*, I am convinced that my concern is valid.

The author of *Massage Therapy and Medications* is a pharmacist and a Registered Massage Therapist. Persad provides clear and extensive learning objectives. A brief summary of those objectives include:

- A basic understanding of the concepts and principles of pharmacology
- More confidence researching drugs and reading drug profiles
- An understanding of the importance of including medication information in case history taking
- Basic principles about how the mechanisms of drug action can interact with the effects of massage therapy
- An understanding of how medication effects can influence selection and application of massage techniques and hydrotherapy
- An awareness of how certain drug effects can contraindicate massage and make it necessary to postpone treatments

The book is divided into two major sections. The first section—Basic Concepts and Guidelines—educates the therapist as to how medications work, provides an introduction to pharmaceutical terms and concepts, and explains how drugs are administered and processed in the body. This section also provides a sample medication history client intake form and a sample letter of correspondence with the client's primary caregiver.

The second section—Commonly Prescribed Medications and Treatment Planning—is a resource center of commonly prescribed drugs for various conditions, their effects on the body and what the therapist must consider when

working with a client who is taking a certain medication.

A typical chapter in the second section describes and discusses a specific condition, the pharmaceuticals commonly used to treat that condition, and their mechanisms of action. There is a chart describing side effects of the medication, guidelines for appropriate use of massage and hydrotherapy, and guidelines for exercise. Simple illustrations and charts reinforce the learning process.

Persad supplies information on the most commonly prescribed drug groups but with the exception of a few examples, does not provide a listing of brand-name drugs within a group. For example, in the chapter "Drugs for Managing Cardiovascular Disease," there is discussion of beta blockers, calcium channel blockers, nitrates and ACE inhibitors, but the brand name of my old buddy, Lotensin, is missing. I so wanted to see it there for easy reference! Given the dynamic nature of the pharmaceutical industry, perhaps I want the impossible, but a more comprehensive listing of brand-name drugs and their generics would be nice.

In *Massage Therapy and Medications*, Persad has succeeded in making the complex accessible. As our population ages, many new drugs are appearing on the market and more prescriptions are being written than ever before. *Massage Therapy and Medications* is a gift to our profession that offers a beginning point—once again—by challenging the norms with new information and a different way of looking at the client interview and the massage therapy experience.

Curties-Overzet Publications has a track record of publishing groundbreaking and maybe even revolutionary materials for the massage profession. Other titles from the publisher include *Breast Massage*, *Massage Therapy and Cancer*, and *Making Sense of Research*. Persad's *Massage Therapy and Medications* is no exception to this pioneering tradition.