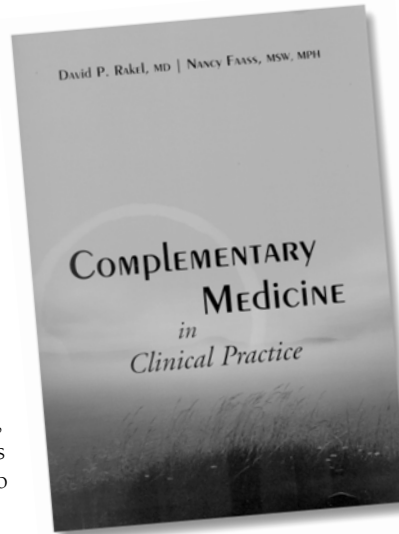


Integrating complementary medicine

Complementary medicine in clinical practice. David Rakel, Nancy Faass. Massachusetts: Jones and Bartlett, 2006 (xvii + 552 pp, \$99.95). ISBN 0 7637 3065 3.

THERE IS MOUNTING EVIDENCE to demonstrate increasing consumer use and acceptance of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Further, the evidence suggests that health care consumers are not seeking CAM therapies to the exclusion of dominant Western medicine approaches. Rather, they are choosing to *integrate* various forms of health care to suit their perceived health needs. It is in this context that Rakel and Faass discuss the concept of *integrative medicine*, providing information about eight major forms of CAM and methods of integrating their use into routine medical practice.

Because the landscape of the public seeking health care is changing, conventional medical practice needs to change. The authors not only recognise this but embrace it and propose a new model of integrative medical care. As a chiropractic clinician and an educator, I was interested to learn how the authors defined integrative medicine. Many CAM practitioners can be somewhat defensive and sceptical, fearing that their therapy may be consumed by the dominant Western medicine practice. So it was refreshing and comforting to read that



this text advocates a collaborative approach to health care, where CAM therapies are encouraged to work alongside Western medicine to deliver “holistic health care” to the patient.

This text also “walks the talk”. It embraces an evidence-based approach to medical practice, using such an approach to argue the case for incorporating complementary therapies and services. The list of contributors is impressive — those that are leaders in their field. The reader can therefore be confident that they are receiving up-to-date, best practice information.

I am very comfortable recommending this text. It has an easy reading style. It introduces CAM and integrative medicine in a logical and informative way, provides strategies for integrating them into current medical practice, and then gives succinct information about the eight major systems of CAM from research, educational and practical perspectives.

Complementary medicine in clinical practice is suitable not only for the Western medical practitioner but also for their allied health practitioner colleagues.

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