

Anthony J Proust

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ANTHONY PROUST was born in Sydney on 23 February 1924 and graduated in medicine from the University of Sydney in 1948. After doing his residency at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, he studied and worked overseas from 1950 to 1953, first at Winnipeg General Hospital and the Manitoba Sanatorium in Canada, then at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, and finally in Edinburgh and London. In 1953 he gained membership of both the London and Edinburgh colleges of physicians.

As a well trained general physician with expertise in thoracic medicine and diabetes mellitus, Tony moved to Canberra in 1954. He first practised medicine in a partnership and later entered full-time consultant practice. Tony's expertise in tuberculosis and lung disease led to an invitation to become foundation Director of Tuberculosis for the Australian Capital Territory and Director of the Canberra Chest Clinic, a position he held from 1967 until his retirement in 1985. He was elected Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (Edinburgh) (1971), the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (1978) and the Royal College of Physicians (London) (1981).

One of Tony's major contributions to medical research was as coordinator of the Australian Rifampicin Trial (published in 1971 and 1972), a trial that led to the drug becoming the mainstay of antituberculosis treatment, which it remains to this day. In 1984,



he founded a medical periodical, the *Australian Tuberculosis Newsletter*, a publication that remains alive and well. He was a longstanding member of both the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Australian Society of the History of Medicine.

Tony's reputation also extended outside Australia. In 1981, Sr Mary Aquinas invited him to work with her at the world famous Ruttonjee Hospital for tuberculosis in Hong Kong. In 1991, St John's Medical College, Bangalore, appointed him Visiting Professor of Medicine.

Tony's interest in diabetes continued, and his passion for the history of medicine grew with age. His *History of tuberculosis in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea* was published in 1991, and his final book, *A companion of the history of medicine in Australia 1788–1939*, appeared in 2003. He was contemplating another work, on medical women in Australia, when his last illness, cryptogenic fibrosing alveolitis, overtook him on 16 May 2005. He is remembered by his wife Moya, their five children and eight grandchildren.

John Thompson

BOOK REVIEW

Psychotropics, A to Z

Essential psychopharmacology. The prescriber's guide. Stephen M Stahl. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005 (xv + 571 pp, \$120). ISBN 0 521 01169 8.

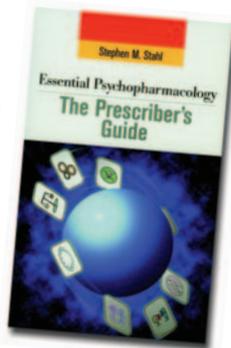
PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS are heavily marketed and widely prescribed in general practice and Stephen Stahl, an internationally recognised clinician and teacher in psychopharmacology, is tapping into the need for a practical prescriber's guide to psychotropic drug use.

He has skilfully condensed essential information on individual psychotropic drugs and presented it in an attractive, user-friendly format. Information on each drug is broken down into five colour-coded sections: therapeutics; side effects; dosage and use; special populations; and the art of psychopharmacology, including how to get the best use out of a drug.

The author also uses a list of icons to alert the reader to the class of drug, mechanism of action and concerns with drug interactions or major side effects.

The drugs are listed in alphabetical order by their generic name and are supplemented by an index with generic and trade names allowing quick and easy reference for the busy clinician.

For the Australian reader, approved indications for each of the drugs may differ from those in the United States so you may need to



access "the yellow book" (Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits) to obtain information on PBS listings. Also, some medications are available in the US but are not approved for marketing in Australia. For example, since the book was published, regulatory decisions have led to the withdrawal of nefazodone from the market due to safety issues.

There is considerable duplication of information for drugs of a similar class, such as the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). However, the advantage is that the prescriber can readily obtain all the information required on a particular drug without needing to access other chapters of the book.

While the author clearly states in his introduction that certain drugs and combinations of drugs may be for the expert only, this is not always highlighted in the text, such as combination antidepressants with mirtazapine, venlafaxine or SSRIs, colloquially known as "Californian rocket fuel".

There is much in this book to recommend it to general practitioners, medical students and experts, but it is a glossy production and at \$120 for the paperback, the cost is on the high side.

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