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Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

AN EXCELLENT BOOK

Medical Abbreviations: 24,000 Conveniences at the Expense of Communications and Safety, 11th Edition by Neil M. Davis
Neil M. Davis Associates, 1143 Wright Drive, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-2721. Publication Date 2003. 430 pages, ISBN 0-931431-11-5. Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. 2002112731. $24.95

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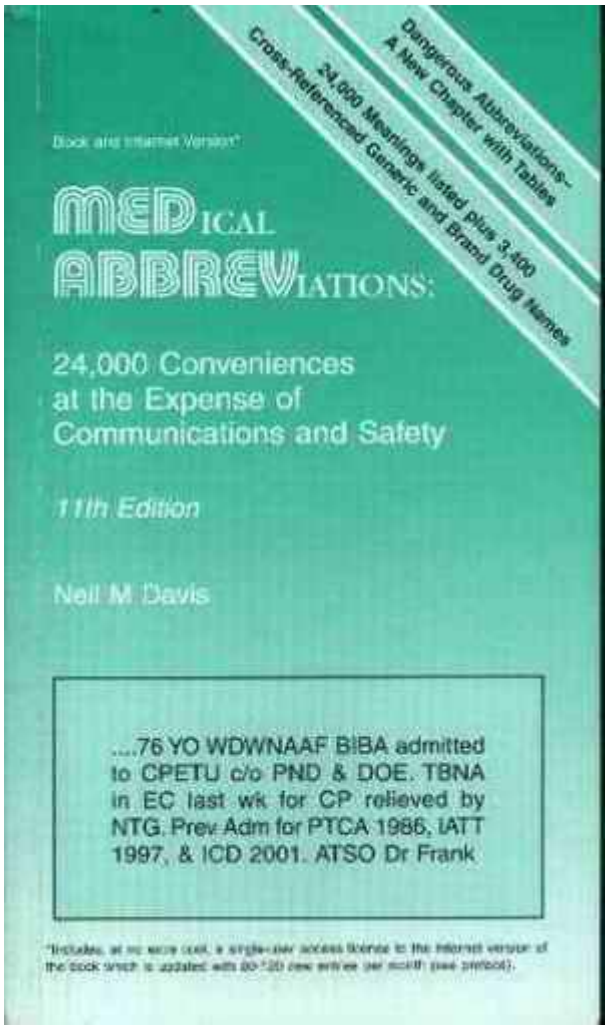

Abbreviations are a convenient time saver and an easy way of avoiding the possibility of misspelling words. Presently, the use of abbreviations for the medical names create a lot of chaos and are not recognised by the readers in the different geographical areas. There is a lot of variability in the expression and interpretation of these acronyms. There are no standards and universal acceptance for the abbreviation used in prescriptions, consultations, standing orders, medication records, hospital pharmacies and health care information. Hence, at times these are misinterpreted. This can lead to delay in initiating treatment, hazardous dose administration and fatal accidents in medical field.

This book can instantaneously search for the meaning of 24000 abbreviations, acronyms and symbols often used in medical practice. At the same time it also offers normal laboratory values for different investigations and cross references for the 3400 generic and brand names of the commonly prescribed drugs. This vocabulary is comprehensive, easy to grasp and handy to carry. The information is compiled to assist individuals reading and transcribing medical records, medically related communication and to develop an accurate prescribing habits. This book is full of knowledge and covers abbreviations used in daily practice. It offers a single user license for assessing Internet version of this edition at no extra cost. The book also gives several dangerous and ambiguous abbreviations. Another useful feature is the reverse search feature. For instance one can search all abbreviations containing the word *laproscopic*. The majority of these symbols and words appear to be more scientific oriented. This book also guides the ways to use this book in a simple manner. All the lettered abbreviations are arranged in an alphabetical order. It also

emphasis that apothecary symbols which are only informative should not be used for the reason that the lack uniformity.

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The book suffers from stumbling blocks that may restrict its use. There is uncertainty of the indications of a few abbreviations for which clarification is required. The book claims that the abbreviations unmentioned may be obsolete or Latin. The coding of the symbols or the abbreviation are according to USA English version and thus there are variation in the spellings. Because of this language difference abbreviations are often reversed for example HIV is spelled VIH in French or Spanish. No evidence is listed for quoting the Reference values (international and conventional) for the laboratory parameters as it may differ in quality control measure.

Nevertheless, this book is of utmost utility to health professionals and paramedics in availing themselves of the application of these acronyms and its interpretation.

-Dr Anshu Sethi & Dr BK Bajaj
New Delhi, India



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