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Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

...AN INVALUABLE BOOK FOR ALL MEDICAL PERSONNEL ...a complete book in itself and a must buy for all those concerning with the field of Medicine. The author has utilized the experience gathered during the previous 11 editions to create a masterpiece in the form of 12 th Edition...

Medical Abbreviations: 26,000 Conveniences at the Expense of Communications and Safety, 12th Edition by Neil M. Davis
Neil M. Davis Associates, 1143 Wright Drive, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-2721. Publication Date January 2005. 470 pages, ISBN-10: 0931431123; ISBN-13: 978-0931431128. Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. 2004096392. $24.95

Website: http://www.medabbrev.com/

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Please the linked page (page016) to read review of 10th Edition (2001)

Please the linked page (page013) to read review of 11th Edition (2003)

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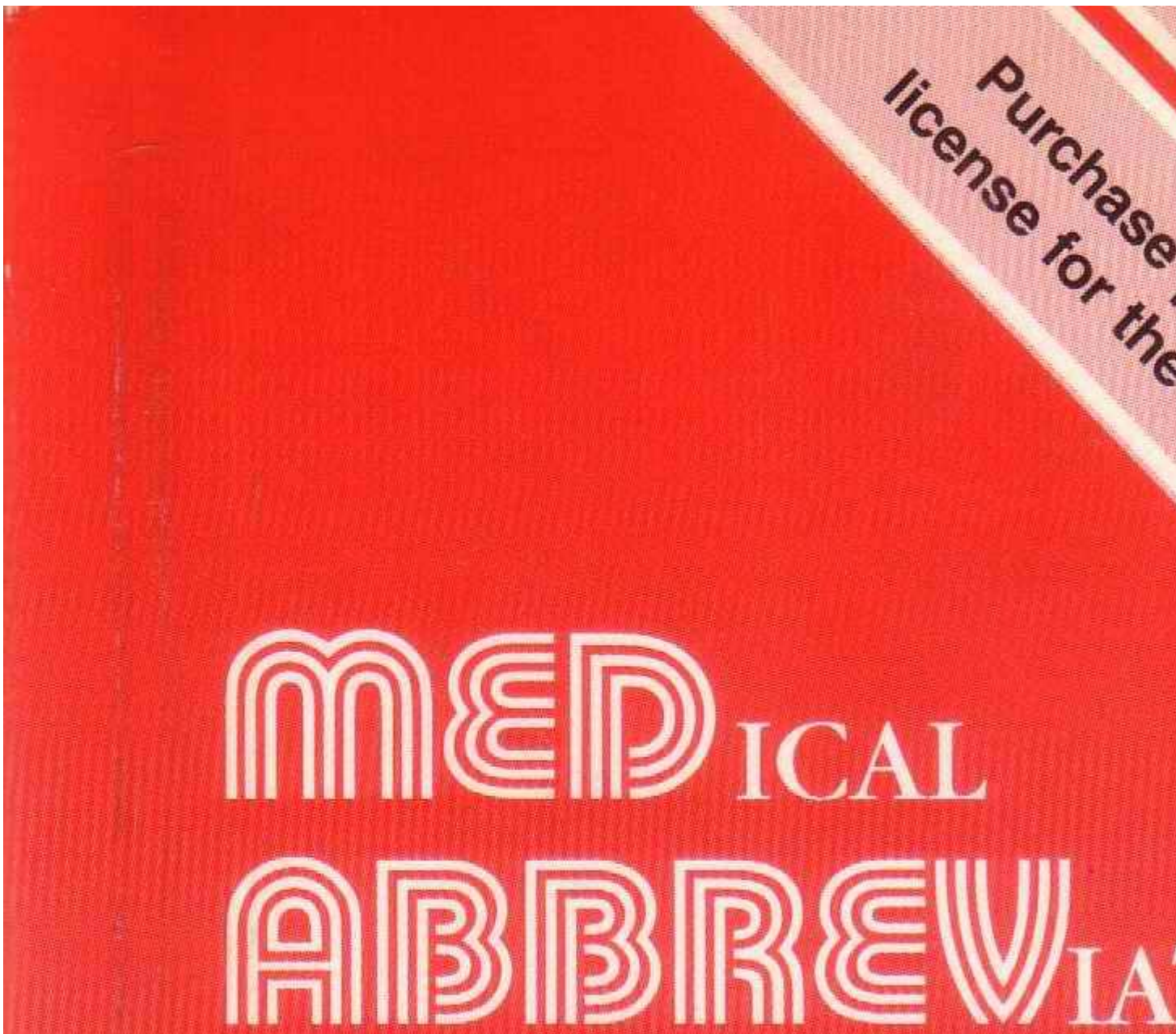

Just as one goes through the title, the desire of acquiring it shoots up immediately as none of the Medical Dictionaries cover such a large number of abbreviations in addition of they being cumbersome. As you open the book, the OTABIND technology (bound to stay open) gives you a pleasant surprise about the latest technologies being used in preparing the books.

The Chapter 1 takes us to the Introduction which puts forward the utility of the book itself. It reads, "**This list has been compiled to assist individuals in reading and transcribing medical records, medically-related communications, and prescriptions.**" Then a WARNING in a box clearly make us aware of the mishaps that abbreviations can lead to, thus putting forward the negative aspects of using medical abbreviations also.

Chapter 2: Dangerous, Contradictory, and/or Ambiguous Abbreviations

This chapter further stresses the error potential of Medical Abbreviations which is important also, as in Medicine we are dealing with the lives of the patients. An elaborate discussion with numerous examples suggests that the author is not just presenting the 'Alice in Wonderland' type picture to the readers but also showcasing the other side of it. The 5th example in the chapter is:

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The abbreviation "U" for unit is the most dangerous one in the book, having caused numerous tenfold insulin and heparin overdoses. The word unit should never be abbreviated. The handwritten U for unit has been mistaken for a zero, causing tenfold errors. The handwritten U has also been read as the number four, six, and as "cc."

Along with it the chapter consists of two tables on the following:

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- Dangerous abbreviations and dosage designations
- Example of abbreviations that have contradictory or ambiguous meanings.

Chapter 3: A Healthcare Controlled Vocabulary

The author starts by stressing the need of a controlled vocabulary in the field of Medicine similar to what is used in the aviation industry. Then the author with his experience of 37 years of studying medical errors gives 'Examples of a Controlled Vocabulary' in a tabulated form. It gives examples of the errors that we commit so often that we don't even realize they are errors.

Chapter 4: Medical Abbreviation Primer

It exposes the reader to the most commonly used Medical Abbreviations and orients the reader to the World of the Abbreviations. A list of 275 abbreviations arranged by Categories such as Physical Examination, Diseases and Symptoms, Clinical Laboratory Drug Classes, and etc. constitute the chapter.

A noteworthy example given here is- *Stat* . This is one of the most commonly used terms in the field of Medicine. But very few would know that it means 'immediately'. Even I got to know only after reading the book.

Chapter 5: Lettered Abbreviations and Acronyms

...Chapter 5 forms the body of the book and gives a detailed list of abbreviations arranged in alphabetical order from A-Z. The chapter spread across 355 pages covers almost all the medical abbreviations that exist on Earth. For the new ones coming up, the book provides you a two-year, single user access license to the Internet-version of the book. This Internet-version is updated with 80 new entries each month...
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This also covers a few very valuable mnemonics. E.g. 1. Mnemonic for formatting physician orders: A.D.C. VAAN DIML

Admit, **D**iagnosis, **C**ondition, **V**itals, **A**ctivity, **A**llergies, **N**ursing Procedures, **D**iet, **I**ns and outs, **M**edication, **L**abs.

E.g. 2. Mnemonic for the diagnosis of Coma: AEIOU TIPS

Alcohol, **E**ncephalopathy, **I**nsulin, **O**piates, **U**remia, **T**rauma, **I**nfection, **P**sychiatric, and **S**yncope.

If you thought that's all, then you are wrong. 4 Chapters still remain.

Chapter 6: Symbols and Numbers

Chapter 7: Tables and Lists

Chapter 8: Cross-Referenced List of Generic and Brand Drug Names. This chapter covers the latest Brand names and is arranged in alphabetical order again for the convenience of the reader.

Chapter 9: Normal Laboratory Values. It has been given in both the Conventional Units & SI units.

At various places in the book the author has asked for Additions, Corrections and Suggestions from the readers. This helps in increasing the author-reader interaction.

In short a complete book in itself and a must buy for all those concerning with the field of Medicine. The author has utilized the experience gathered during the previous 11 editions to create a masterpiece in the form of 12 th Edition.

-Abhishek Bansal
Dr.Abhishek Bansal,a graduate of the prestigious Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi, has been a Scholarship and Rank holder throughout. His leadership qualities are exemplified by the various developments that he brought about as the President of the Student's Association. As the one with a great research aptitude he's been part of a few research projects. Extra-curricular skills include reading and outdoor sports. Dr. Bansal



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Editor's recommendation. This book is recommended by the editor.