

CD-ROMs I'd Like to See

Howard J. Bennett, MD

Washington, DC

Every year, computer magazines publish review articles of the top CD-ROMs that were released in the previous 12 months. What would these articles look like if computer programs were written just for doctors? Here's a sample of what we might find.

Where in the World Are Carmen Sandiego's Veins?

Salmonella Software; \$45. ★★★ $\frac{1}{2}$

She may be a world traveler, but on her latest trip overseas, Ms Sandiego got careless when she ate lunch at a seedy, out-of-the-way restaurant. Now she's come down with a whopping case of diarrhea, and she shows up in your office with fever, abdominal pain, and 10% dehydration. What caused Carmen's illness? Is it contagious? Will you be able to save her so she can roam the globe again?

Doctors will love this interactive adventure. Not only do you have to find a vein in one of Carmen's vasoconstricted limbs, but most of her bodily fluids will need to be examined to come up with the correct diagnosis.

TurfWorks

Black Cloud Interactive; \$38. ★★ $\frac{1}{2}$

This program helps primary care docs turf unwanted patients to specialists. You answer a series of questions that

From the Departments of Health Care Sciences & Pediatrics, The George Washington University Medical Center. Dr Bennett is the editor of *The Best of Medical Humor: A Collection of Articles, Essays, Poetry & Letters Published in the Medical Literature*. Correspondence should be addressed to Howard J. Bennett, MD, 2820 McKinley Place, NW, Washington, DC 20015.

include the diagnosis, insurance coverage, and whether or not the patient sends you candy or other gifts at Christmas. The program then generates a "dumping profile" and time-honored methods to get the patient off your service and onto someone else's. On-line help offers clear examples and takes into account the day of the week, time of day, and other variables.

This program would have received a higher rating except that BCI also publishes *TurfWorks Pro*, which is designed for specialists who want state-of-the-art techniques to outmaneuver their primary care colleagues.

Cyst

Lipoma Productions; \$59. ★★★★★

The wonderful world of *Cyst* begins as you fall into the pages of a dermatology book and land in a strange island world. As you explore this world, you are presented with a series of challenging diagnoses. You discover patients with macules, papules, crusts, nodules, bullae, and papulosquamous eruptions—all beautifully rendered in 3-D. A haunting musical soundtrack enhances hours of game play. As an added bonus, Atarax samples are included to counteract the inevitable pruritis that comes from playing the game.

Vacation Doubler

Inspired Software; \$79. ★★★★★

In the past, doctors had to work late, skip lunch, or die young to get managed care administrators off their backs. Now, however, by simply downloading *Vacation Doubler* onto your office com-

puter, you can beat the bean counters at their own game. With the click of a button, *Vacation Doubler* inflates your productivity statistics so it will look as though you're Marcus Welby in overdrive. The administrators will be so pleased that you'll not only get more time off, but the CEO will probably give you the keys to his Swiss chalet.

Medicine's Greatest Hits

On-Call Entertainment; \$55. ★★★ $\frac{1}{2}$

This CD is filled with glorious moments from the pages of medical history. You can watch mold grow in Alexander Fleming's kitchen, listen in on Harvey Cushing's first craniotomy, or see famous kings and queens as they are bled to death. The disk includes over 25 QuickTime movies starring today's most popular actors. Charlton Heston plays Hippocrates walking the streets of Cos. Tom Hanks does a deft turn as William Harvey. And Charles Bronson is perfect as Ignaz Semmelweis, pacing the floor of his asylum, muttering to himself about the importance of good hand washing. The CD also contains a trivia game and the 1996 edition of the *Guinness Book of Medical Records*.

Pathology Chess

Sarcoid Systems; \$35. ★★ $\frac{1}{2}$

The power of 3-D animation and fantasy meet in this medical version of an old classic. Players move pieces across a checkered battleground in an attempt to capture their opponent's king. When a piece is "captured," however, it doesn't just disappear off the board. In this chess game, the piece dies, and it's

up to you to figure out what killed him. Animated orderlies carry the deceased to pathology, where you review the history, perform an autopsy, and inform the grieving family why their little pawn (or knight, etc) died. A special button transports you to the library, where you can look up information about various diseases and other fatal conditions. Play is smooth and easy, and the program occasionally responds by voice. For example, after a clever diagnosis, you might hear, "Good job. Have you considered a career in pathology?"

SimCafeteria

Oat-Cell Productions; \$32. ★★★

SimCafeteria is an animated game and planning simulator that lets doctors build a hospital cafeteria from the ground up. The program contains six modules which can be worked on in any order. You get to pick out the tacky decor. You get to hire the rude workers. You get to order the outdated equipment. And finally, if you select the executive privilege option, you get to overcook the food.

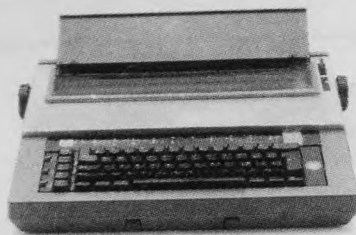
This program will keep doctors entertained for hours. It's a welcome addition to Oat-Cell's previous titles: *SimHMO*, *SimSurgeon*, and *SimNursing Home*.

ER—The CD

Central Line Publishers; \$45. ★★★

Out-of-this-world graphics and a star-studded cast will keep you on the edge of your seat in this CD version of the hit TV series. In this interactive adventure, you get to play any character in the show. Then, as patients burst through the doors in various states of exsanguination, you get to bark out orders, fill out forms, or grill Carter to your heart's content. Your goal is to accumulate points by saving lives and keeping the ratings high. Extra points are made whenever you catch someone reading x-rays backwards or mispronouncing medical words.

Category 1 CME credit can be earned if you e-mail your scores to Michael Crichton or the publisher.



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