

BOOK REVIEW

The Best of Medical Humor, Second Edition. Howard J. Bennett. Hanley & Belfus, Inc, Philadelphia, Pa, 1997, ISBN 1-56053-200-9.

Humor is good medicine and humor about medicine is great, especially a little black humor. We need to laugh at ourselves and laughing at (with) our colleagues isn't so bad either. Dr Bennett has written and collected humor for physicians at every level of training. Some sections are funnier after you have completed the experience than they may be during the experience. For example, a young friend did not find the piece on medical school admission interviews nearly as funny as I did. He only wished they had asked about the Sooner's football team or his housepainting career.

This is a book you need to keep around the office and your home. It can be a welcome addition to a QA meeting or a reference when consulting a subspecialist colleague. Your family will also enjoy many of the short stories. My family is always thankful for a little levity, especially aimed at their mother and her profession.

No one will find all the anecdotes amusing. But I can't imagine anyone (well, okay, a couple of people) who will not laugh while reading at least a few of the stories. This would make a wonderful gift for any doctor who needs a humor boost, and unlike all our other medical books it will never be out of date.

The Best of Medical Humor is good medicine. I recommend a couple of pages BID. Safe to increase the dosage to PRN.

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SOFTWARE REVIEW

Coronary Heart Disease. Ciba-Geigy Corporation, Medical Education & Publications, 556 Morris Avenue, Summit, NJ 07901; 1-800-453-8040. \$70.00.

DOCUMENTATION: 26-page booklet.

HOW SUPPLIED: CD-ROM.

HARDWARE & SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS: MacIntosh: 4MB RAM, 13-inch or larger color monitor with at least 256 colors, and System 7.0 or higher. Windows: an IBM PC-compatible computer (386 or better), Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, Microsoft-compatible mouse, 4MB RAM, an SVGA monitor configured at a minimum resolution of 640 X 480 and 246-color mode.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT: (800) 453-8040

DEMONSTRATION DISK/TRIAL PERIOD: No

GUARANTEE: No

RATING: Patient use: Satisfactory.

PROFESSIONAL USE: Unsatisfactory.

Most physicians remember from medical school the medical illustrations of Frank Netter, MD. My first exposure to Dr Netter's beautiful, detailed illustrations was through Ciba's *Clinical Symposia* brought home by my father, a family physician.

The *Clinical Symposia* are still published, although Ciba is now Novartis, and there is a new medical illustrator. Novartis has plans to update several portions of the content and art found in *The Ciba Collection of Medical Illustrations* and publish them as interactive multimedia software.

The first piece of this software is *Coronary Heart Disease*. This and future software will be available for both MacIntosh and PC platforms. The CD-ROM-based software will be true multimedia, including updated text, animation, audio, and Quicktime movies.

Coronary Heart Disease is aimed at students, instructors, practitioners, and patients. For the student, there

are learning objectives: cardiac anatomy and its appearance during coronary angiography; the stages in the development of atherosclerotic plaque; details about ischemic heart disease, and so on. After each section of the presentation, there is a posttest for the user. Novartis has tried to develop a program that will give students confidence that they have fulfilled the learning objectives and mastered the material. Instructors can use this program as a classroom supplement to illustrate the subject content and stimulate student interest.

There is more than 2 hours of presentation material on the CD. For the practicing physician, Novartis hopes *Coronary Heart Disease* will serve as patient education and as a CME-type of refresher course.

Although the presentations are divided into two main components, medical education and patient education, the divisions are not mutually exclusive. Patients will find some of the medical education section informative and understandable; likewise, medical personnel will find some of the patient education section interesting as well.

The medical education menu is illustrated in Figure 1. The coronary anatomy section includes a good Quicktime movie of coronary angiography. The myocardial infarction section shows Dr Netter's anatomic illustrations of the progression of an infarction with corresponding ECG changes. It also shows the differences and consequences of anterior and posterior myocardial infarctions. The section on atherosclerosis tracks the progression of the disease at various stages and discusses angina pectoris symptoms. The diagnosis and management section discusses ECG, coro-

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FIGURE 1

The medical education contents of *Coronary Heart Disease*.

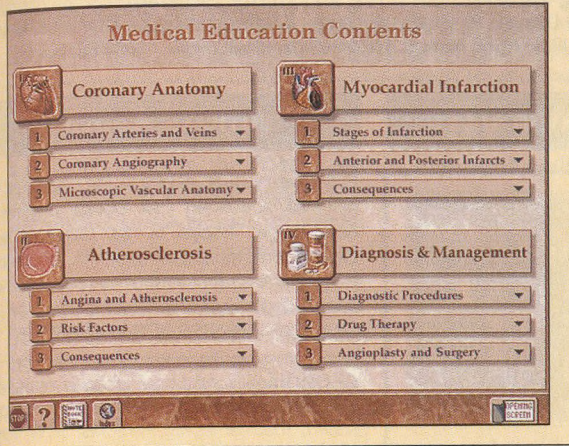
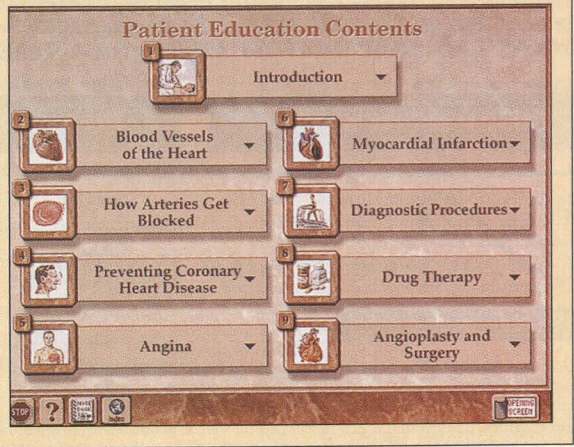


FIGURE 2

The patient education contents of *Coronary Heart Disease*.



nary angiography, nuclear cardiology, echocardiography, angioplasty, and coronary artery bypass surgery.

The patient education section (Figure 2) includes slide presentations for each of the topics. The "Angioplasty and Surgery" section has a Quicktime movie of a coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) procedure. My 18-year-old son found this movie particularly interesting, as would most patients.

I loaned the CD to two of my computer-literate patients. One had a CABG a year ago and the other was a middle-aged man in good health. They encountered no problems in installation of the program. Both found the most interesting aspects were the Quicktime movies of the coronary angiography and the bypass operation. The patient who had the CABG, in particular, found it informative. He told me he had always wondered what the operation was like and that now he at least had some idea.

How well does this CD presentation accomplish Ciba-Geigy's goals of presenting a multimedia program for both medical professionals and patients? Installation and start-up of the software are trouble-free and

professional. However, as with anything that tries to be all things to all people, *Coronary Heart Disease* has both hits and misses. The information is factual and generally consistent with current medical practice guidelines. However, I found no mention of thrombolysis for myocardial infarction, a standard treatment for more than 10 years. The illustrations, Quicktime movies, and sound files were informative and entertaining at the same time.

As a refresher for the physician on coronary anatomy, this is a good program. However, I do not think that the practitioner will find much new information here that is not readily available from other traditional sources. In my opinion, for the medical student, the program should be used as a review or starting point for further study. The student would be better served by investing in a good textbook of cardiology. The best use for *Coronary Heart Disease* is patient education. The physician could use the office computer to go over information with the patient or have the patient view information in a separate patient education room, if one is available. Patients could borrow the software

for review at home at their own pace. A excellent feature in this regard is the program's ability to embed the physician's own audio notes for patients to listen to as they view the presentation.

There were two enhancements missing from *Coronary Heart Disease*. There is no provision to print any slide or portion of the program. In addition, the program lacks an uninstall feature. Because installation adds files to the Windows directory of the user's hard drive, it is virtually impossible to recover hard disk space without an uninstall feature if the user wishes to remove the program. I hope that the Novartis programmers make these two additions in future volumes of the series.

The bottom line is that this is well-conceived, well-illustrated (thanks to Frank Netter) multimedia software. It is more useful in patient education than in professional education. I would recommend this for physicians who routinely use a computer in patient education. I would not, however, recommend it as an adjunct to professional continuing education.

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