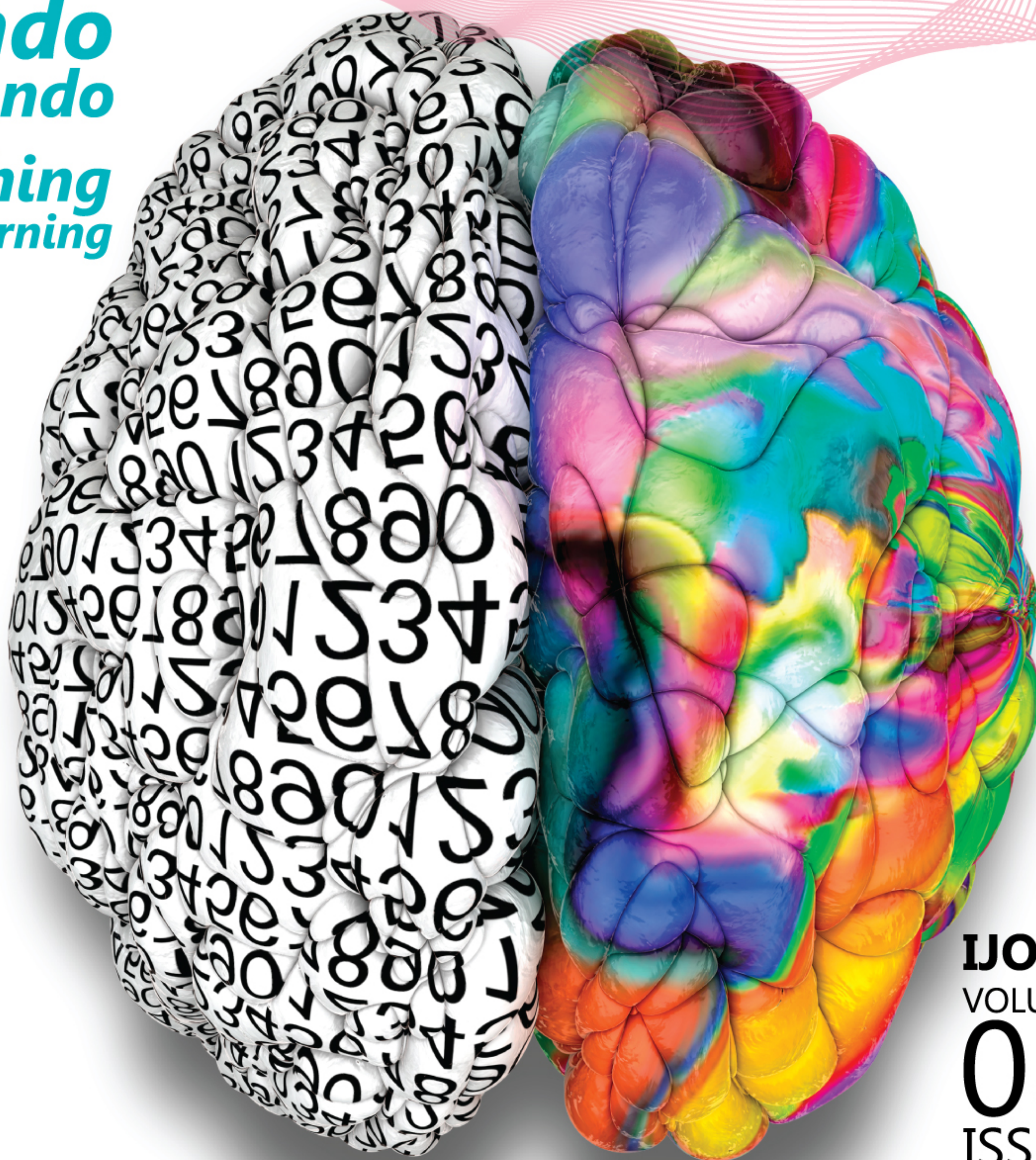


INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CLINICAL SKILLS

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IJOCS
VOLUME
08
ISSUE
04

A Peer Reviewed International Journal for the Advancement of Clinical Skills

— JULY —
2014

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Foreword

Welcome to the latest edition of the International Journal of Clinical Skills (IJOCS), Volume 8, Issue 4, July 2014.

Studies demonstrate that medical students and newly qualified doctors feel underprepared with respect to writing prescriptions safely, with many suggesting there is insufficient formal teaching and a limited opportunity to practise the basic prescribing skills required during clinical attachments. Dr Stephen Knight and colleagues present a study which suggests that in a student's first clinical year a Peer Assisted Learning approach can link theory to practice and thus increase the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for safe prescribing. This study comes at a crucial time, when electronic prescribing is rapidly becoming the norm.

In the event of a lower limb injury, splintage is one of the most basic forms of initial management. It helps reduce movement, prevent further tissue damage and reduce pain. Whilst a number of splintage options are available to those in a hospital type setting, splintage options for an unprepared bystander are likely to be scarce. Mr Angus Maclean presents a method for quickly applying a splintage to a patient's lower limbs. This method is intended to be used in the pre-hospital setting, where no specialist equipment might be available.

Also in this issue, IJOCS Book Reviewers Dr Nahida Khan and Dr Jonathan Bath review 'The Top 100 Drugs' and 'Clinical Skills for Medical Students' respectively. When considering the fact that there are many drugs and clinical skills with which medical students and junior doctors have to familiarise themselves with, these two books are a valuable resource and they present all the necessary relevant information clearly and concisely.

As always, your feedback is invaluable for the continued development of the International Journal of Clinical Skills – the only peer reviewed international journal devoted to clinical skills. E-mail: feedback@ijocs.org

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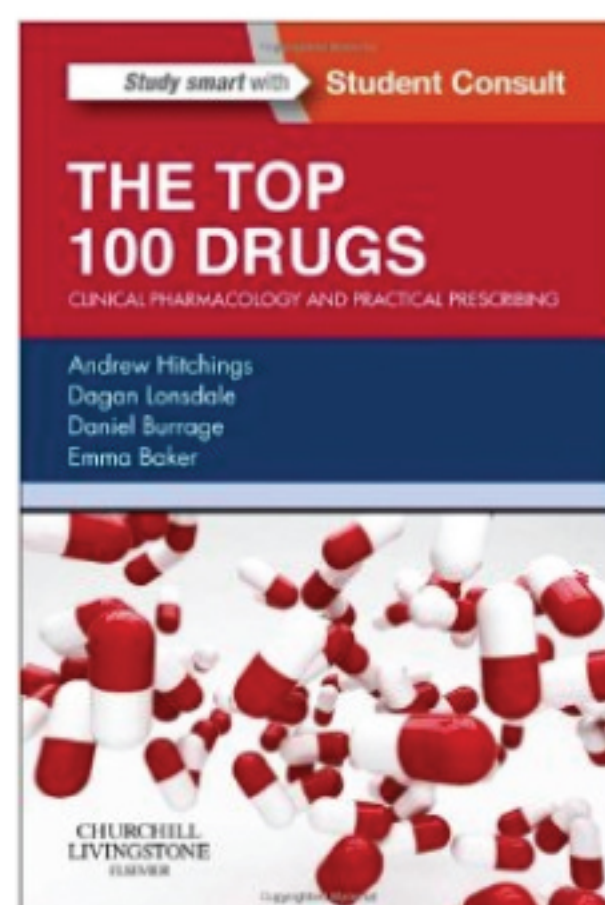
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IJOCS Book Review



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Publisher:

Churchill Livingstone

ISBN: 9780702055164

Book Review: The Top 100 Drugs – Clinical Pharmacology and Practical Prescribing

In the words of the authors of this book, 'learning pharmacology is hard'. With so many pharmacology books on offer in the market, one can find it an onerous task to choose one that is most apposite to their needs. This book goes a long way in making learning pharmacology a whole lot easier and, dare I say, more fun for the reader. This book achieves the often intractable goal of successfully marrying theory with practice by making pharmacology relevant to the clinical setting.

That the book's title is "The Top 100 Drugs" is striking and draws the reader's attention to the fact that there are thousands of drugs in everyday usage, some more commonly used than others. This book deals with drugs that the authors consider to be in most common use in both the primary and secondary settings.

Primarily intended for the medical student, this book arguably is also an indispensable tool for junior doctors, those who are not yet fully conversant with the drugs in question. Compiled by four clinical pharmacologists with the assistance of medical students and junior doctors, this book has been specifically written to cater for the unmet needs of those target audiences.

A few pages at the start explain the format of the rest of the book. Two pages are dedicated to each drug, one page dealing with clinical pharmacology (subdivided into the headings common indications, mechanism of action, important adverse effects, warnings, and important interactions) and the other with practical prescribing (subdivided into the headings prescription, administration, communication, monitoring, cost, and clinical tip). Of the above, the most useful subsection was

communication wherein guidance on how and what to communicate to the patient with regards to the drug is provided.

The information in this book is presented clearly, concisely, and uncannily to the correct level of depth for a book on this subject. The colours used in the book are uniform throughout and do not distract the reader. Key points are highlighted in bold and further emphasis is achieved through the use of red triangles and red crosses to stipulate possible contraindications and circumstances where the drug may be dangerous. Although the book is not pocket-sized, it is not wieldy and can be carried around easily. It can also be accessed online in its entirety, a great convenience for busy health professionals with mobile devices that can access the internet.

There is a separate section at the end of the book devoted to fluids commonly used in clinical practice. This is particularly useful as it is one of the common pitfalls for medical students and junior doctors on the wards. Additionally, there is a self-assessment section at the end of the book complete with answers to help the reader consolidate what has been learnt thus far. Helpfully, next to the questions in this section, the body systems which the drugs are germane to are denoted.

There are several noticeable drawbacks to this book. First and foremost, the book lacks an index section. This makes it difficult to quickly look up particular drugs. There is a contents section in the book, but confusingly the drugs in the contents section are divided up according to systems and then listed alphabetically. This adds an unnecessary layer of complexity to the contents section. The addition of an A to Z serrated edge to this book could potentially facilitate easy access to content. Rather confusingly, the drugs are listed alphabetically by both name or class. This makes it difficult to know if a drug should be looked up according to name or class, thus potentially delaying access to the relevant information.

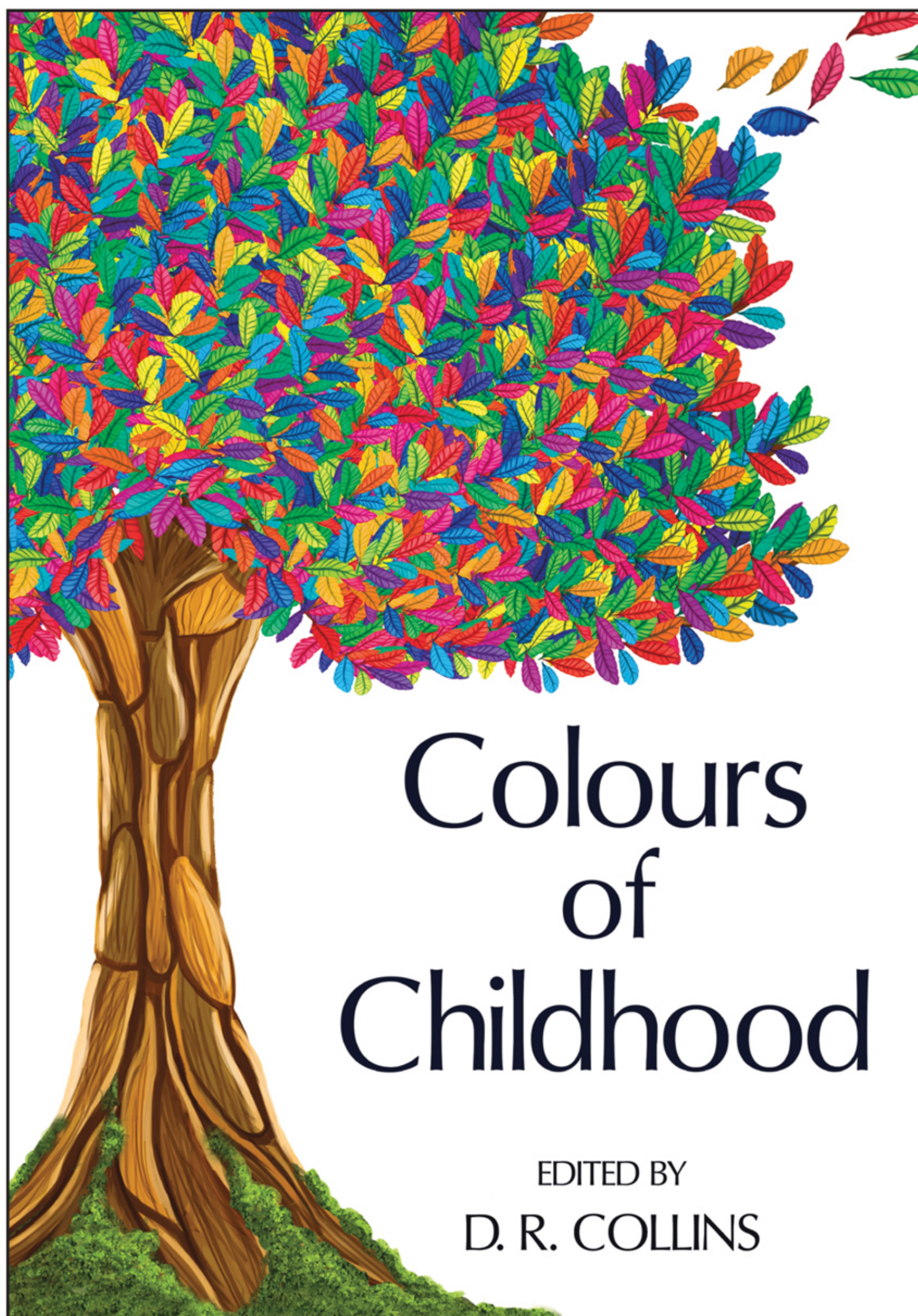
In my humble opinion, this book is an invaluable addition to the corpus of pharmacology books already available. By helping to further make pharmacology accessible, it is definitely one that medical students in their clinical years, as well as junior doctors in foundation training, should consider using.

Review by:

Dr Nahida Khan BSc (Hons) MSc MB BS
IJOCS Book Reviewer

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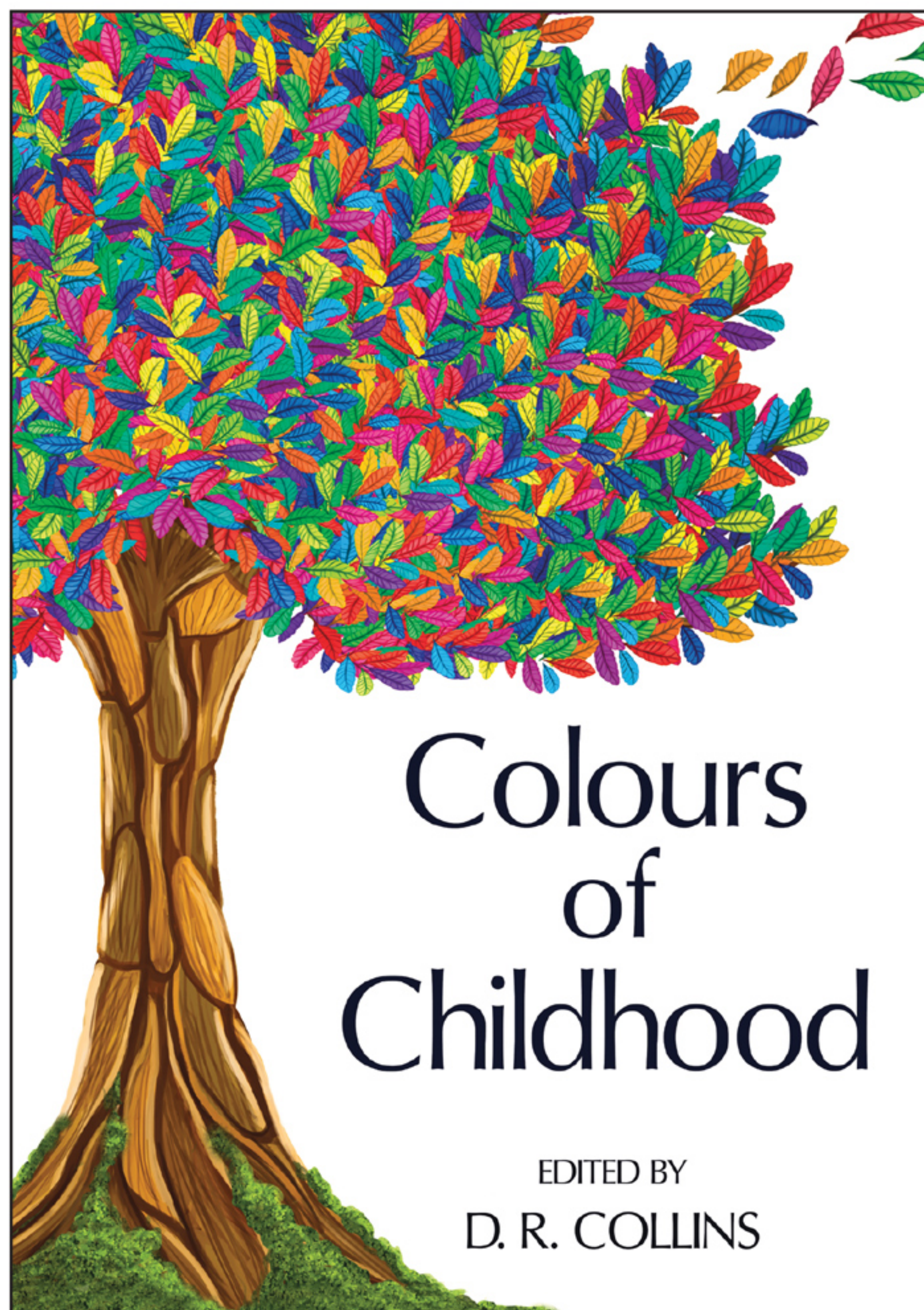
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