

## Book Review

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# La Medicina Complementare nella Pratica Clinica

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Luisa Merati and Barbara Mantellini. *La Medicina Complementare nella Pratica Clinica*.

This almost 500 page elegant and colorful book comes from the long-standing experience of the authors, Drs Merati and Mantellini. Both are psychotherapists holding MDs who further trained in a variety of aspects dealing with CAM. In particular, Dr Merati is chief of a rather unique Psychosomatic Medicine outpatient clinic within a well-respected public hospital in Milano and connected with the Department of Internal Medicine. Here, also under the 'psychosomatic lens', patients with organic diseases are visited with 'the disease seen as a peculiar language of the body and the symptom as its message' (Introduction, page I, Dr Merati). The mission of the book is clearly stated in the title, i.e. *CAM in Clinical Practice*, and it first displays the theoretical basis and rationales behind the clinical application of the main CAM techniques through a number of sections written by experts working in the hospital-clinic.

Chapters on topics such as diet therapy and homeopathy (B. Mantellini), phytotherapy (M.G. Parisi), homotoxicology (S. Armitano), Bach flower therapy (M.G. Parisi and M. Porreca), acupuncture (D. Abbate), reflex therapy (G. Ensabella), Reiki (E. Cofrancesco) and hypnosis therapy (L. Merati and F. Barbagelata) are short but clearly written and with adequate references. The main part of the text is

dedicated to treatment protocols for over 80 diseases and syndromes, which for practical reasons are listed in alphabetical order, although the authors strongly point out the need for a holistic analysis and approach. Interestingly, each disease protocol briefly tackles understanding of clinical symptoms and its psychosomatic analysis and then deepens into hands-on therapeutic schedules from the view of each CAM modality considered, i.e. phytotherapy, homotoxicology, homeopathy, Bachs flower therapy, acupuncture, Reiki and hypnosis. The content is further facilitated by a color code for each of these different approaches to guide the reader to the preferred field throughout the book.

One of the book's main merits is its integrative view based upon daily hospital experience, thus making it invaluable to medical students who still lack such education in their university curricula as well as to GPs and internists overall. Although the current Italian version of the book may limit its diffusion, given the qualifications of the authors and the comprehensive designs of their work, an English version is to be expected. Finally, the demanding title seems to well fit its final results and is in agreement with the oriental flavor of this statement on its opening page: 'there is a power secretly linking each single thing, a power of such strength that you can't take a flower without affecting a star'.

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