

Book Review by Mario Roxas, ND

Herb, Nutrient, and Drug Interactions: Clinical Implications and Therapeutic Strategies

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Use of nutritional and herbal products is a multi-billion dollar industry in the United States. As more people take nutritional supplements and herbal medicines, a growing concern among alternative and conventional practitioners is potential drug/herb and drug/nutrient interactions. Consequently, this book – *Herb, Nutrient, and Drug Interactions: Clinical Implications and Therapeutic Strategies* (HNDI) – comes at an opportune time.

The authors have performed the Herculean task of creating, from a vast collection of references, a detailed guide to potential interactions of the most commonly encountered herbs and nutrients with common prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs.

Published in January 2008, HNDI consists of 70 monographs – 30 herbs (from Aloe to Vitex) and 40 nutrients (subcategorized as vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and nutraceuticals and physiologics).

Each monograph starts with a quick, at-a-glance summary table identifying the particular drug/drug class, a brief mechanism of interaction, and a recommended course of action. The body of the monograph supplies the reader with detailed information outlined by the following subheadings:

- Herb/Nutrient Description: General background about the herb/nutrient (e.g., common species, country of origin, parts used, chemical formula, etc.)
- Herb/Nutrient in Clinical Practice: Historical and contemporary indications for usage, key chemical constituents, and dosage ranges
- Interactions Review: General information regarding interactions with drugs
- Herb-Drug/Nutrient-Drug Interactions: More detailed information about herb/nutrient and specific drugs or drug categories
- Theoretical, Speculative, and Preliminary Interactions Research, Including Overstated Interactions Claims

There is a system of symbols throughout the book to aid the reader in determining the level of clinical significance of the herb- or nutrient-drug interaction, type and clinical significance of the interaction, and strength and quality of the source evidence. Although the symbols are intended to be helpful, they can be somewhat confusing. For instance, the same symbol is used more than once to describe different and, at one point, opposing situations.

The authors have compiled a substantial amount of information into one text. And therein lies the value of this book – pertinent drug interaction data for numerous herbs and nutrients in a single reference.

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