

## Review of Dietary Supplements Pocket Companion

**Dietary Supplements Pocket Companion.** By Pamela Mason (consultant, Monmouthshire, UK). Pharmaceutical Press: London. 2009. xii +278 pp. 10.5 × 18.5 cm. \$34.99. ISBN 978-0-85369-761-9.

This book is intended to serve as a conveniently sized reference text on the most important and frequently used dietary supplements. It is indeed compact, fitting rather easily into one's back pocket or jacket/labcoat pocket. The organization is clean and functional; each ingredient or supplement is listed in alphabetical order and described in the following categories: Description, Human Requirements, Dietary Sources, Constituents (chemical), Action (pharmacology), Possible Uses (with strength of evidence for each), Bioavailability, Precautions/Contraindications, Pregnancy/Breastfeeding, Adverse Effects, Interactions, Dose, and References.

While the book will be of some use to pharmacists and other healthcare professionals, its value is somewhat diminished by the choices of supplements that are covered. For example, nickel, pangamic acid, silicon, and tin are hardly commonly used supplements or ingredients, yet they are covered. More disheartening, from a natural products point of view, is the relatively lean coverage of the major botanicals in commerce. Aloe vera, dong quai, garlic, ginkgo, ginseng, and psyllium are covered, along with some oils (evening primrose, flaxseed, and grapeseed), but major market supplements, such as black cohosh, echinacea, goldenseal, hawthorne, St. John's wort, and valerian are missing. In addition, there are some unclear remarks about drug interactions that are not informative or useful; for example, ginseng (species not specified) "may influence the effect of warfarin". The mechanism or direction of that effect is not provided.

There is now an abundance of books and reference materials purporting to provide concise, accurate guidance on supplements for healthcare professionals. This book sprang from a good concept and layout, but it comes up short, as noted above.

**John H. Cardellina II**

ReevesGroup  
Walkersville, Maryland

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