Shelf Life

Project Inform’s fact-filled tome won’t collect dust

February 1, 1996 By Kathy DeLeon

The dizzying array of available AIDS treatments is enough to daunt even the most self-empowered PWA. Practical information can be hard to come by. To fill this gap, San Francisco AIDS information center Project Inform compiled *The HIV Drug Book* (Pocket Books/New York City).

The *Drug Book* is a consumer friendly, illustrated reference of the wide spectrum of approved and experimental treatments -- mainly pharmaceuticals -- used in treating HIV and related conditions, explaining dosages, uses and possible side effects. It includes a well-written chapter on drug interactions, which is key for those taking a variety of medicines.

The many PWAs looking to round out their treatment program with non-drug approaches will appreciate the guidelines on healthful eating, nutrient supplementation and alternative and holistic therapies. The book also includes practical tips for living with HIV, including dealing with your doctor and getting access to clinical trials, as well as an extensive state-by-state resource list.

However, while each drug listing includes a section on use in pregnant women, there is no category for non-pregnant women. This format follows current Food and Drug Administration policy which fails to require testing drugs in both men and women, despite growing evidence of gender-based differences in drug effectiveness and side effects. Project Inform missed an opportunity to collect whatever limited information on non-pregnant women is available.

Overall, *The HIV Drug Book* is a valuable resource for PWAs who want to make their own treatment decisions.

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