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Book Reviews-HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-Related Terminology reviewed

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Book Reviews



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HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-Related Terminology: A Means of Organizing the Body of Knowledge. Jeffrey T. Huber, and Mary L. Gillaspay. Binghamton, New York: Haworth Press, 1996. 128 pp. With index. ISBN: 1-56024-970-6. \$24.95.

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Perhaps the greatest public-health concern of the late 20th century, HIV/AIDS knows no limits and touches the lives of a great many people. HIV/AIDS still lacks a cure; therefore, it is imperative that everyone, from the general public to high school teachers and to health care professionals, be armed with our only defense to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS — information. Dedicated to all individuals affected by HIV/AIDS, Huber and Gillaspay's book, *HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-Related Terminology: A Means of Organizing the Body of Knowledge*, is designed to meet this crucial information need by providing a vocabulary to assist in the "creation, collection, organization, management, and dissemination of

HIV/AIDS related information."

The authors generously acknowledge that several existing organizational schemes including **Library of Congress Subject Headings**, the **National Library of Medicine's Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)**, and **Sears Subject Headings**, provide terminology for organizing HIV/AIDS information. In fact, the authors take a deep bow to *MeSH* by significantly incorporating MeSH terms into their vocabulary. However, despite the great utility of these controlled vocabularies, Huber and Gillaspay contend that no existing controlled vocabulary truly addresses the multifaceted nature of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The need for a cross-disciplinary organizational scheme as that presented by *HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-Related Terminology: A Means of Organizing the Body of Knowledge* is readily evident when one considers the complexity of HIV/AIDS information which encompasses not only the biomedical sciences, but also addresses psychological, religious, economic, and social concerns.

HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-Related Terminology: A Means of Organizing the Body of Knowledge provides an excellent introduction as well as thorough instructions for use. The volume is divided into two indexes: the hierarchically arranged "Domains and Main Headings" which contains 10 major "domain" headings that are further subdivided into "main headings"; and the easily accessible "Alphabetical Index." The hierarchy presented in the "Domains and Main Headings" index is comforting to those accustomed to using MeSH and is further appended with "Universal Subdivisions" similar to the check tags and subheadings used in MeSH. However, the Universal Subdivisions are more extensive and interdisciplinary in that they consist of terms such as "Sexual orientation," "At-Risk populations," and "Religious Faiths" in addition to the more traditional "Age ranges" and "Geographic names" subdivisions. Two conventions are used in *HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-Related Terminology: A Means of Organizing the Body of Knowledge* to highlight terms which are likely to be found in the biomedical literature as well as to point the user to MeSH should further specificity be required. Firstly, if a term is the same as a MeSH term, it will be denoted by an asterisk (e.g., Pathology*). Secondly, if the term is similar to a MeSH term but is presented in a singular or noninverted form, it is indicated with a "greater than" sign (e.g., Hospice Ser-

vices>). Scope notes facilitate the use of the index. Although the "Domain and Main Headings" index is excellent for broadening or specifying a concept, I found location of a specific topic to be difficult. When searching for a possible location for information on exercise, I was not able to locate the term "exercise" in the index without first consulting the alphabetically-arranged index which referred me to page 54. "Exercise", also a MeSH term was found under the domain heading, "Treatment and Therapies: Medical Management of HIV Infection." Although this was not an intuitive process for me, the alphabetical index allowed access to the term I was searching. The authors point out that HIV/AIDS information is a rapidly expanding and therefore liberally encourage the user to insert terms as they arise as well as to tailor the terminology to meet their local needs.

I applaud the concept of *HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-Related Terminology: A Means of Organizing the Body of Knowledge*; however I do have concern for how it may be most effectively utilized. Huber and Gillaspay's intended audience is any group, organization, or institution, in fact anyone, providing AIDS/HIV services with a need to collect and organize current information about this rapidly-growing area. However, it seems unlikely that a large academic medical library would change their organizational scheme from that of the **National Library of Medicine's** scheme to that suggested by Huber and Gillaspay. Nonetheless, hospital libraries, HIV/AIDS clinics, family planning centers as well as school libraries and those individuals with a private collection of HIV/AIDS information may indeed find *HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-Related Terminology: A Means of Organizing the Body of Knowledge* ideal to meet their needs. The low price of \$24.95 makes *HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-Related Terminology: A Means of Organizing the Body of Knowledge* very accessible.

The importance of Huber and Gillaspay's goal to "facilitate the provision of accurate information to help lighten the burden of those affected by the epidemic and terrible toll it exacts from patients, care givers, families, friends, and society" cannot be stressed enough. Huber must be soundly encouraged and commended for this work which complements his earlier bibliographic tool — *How to Find Information About AIDS* — as the need for easy access to HIV/AIDS information will undoubtedly increase as we move into the 21st century. 🌱

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