
Book reviews

L'Anglais des Spécialités Médicales (English for Medical Specialities)

Didier Carnet and Jean-Pierre Charpy, *Ellipses*, 2015



Whether a health professional must attend a foreign patient in his/her private practice or in a hospital setting, whether s/he has to write a research article, present a paper at a conference, consult a specialised database online, or discuss a case with colleagues from different nationalities, a sound knowledge of English is very useful, not to say compulsory.

The book entitled “L'Anglais des Spécialités Médicales” (English for Medical Specialties) is a French/English bilingual compilation designed to allow French-speaking medical students –interns and externs– and healthcare professionals in general to acquire the linguistic and communicational competence necessary in a specialised (medical) situation. The subtleties of the specialised language related to the following five different semantic categories are provided for 25 different medical specialities, ranging from cardiology to psychiatry and including public health and rehabilitation.

Firstly, the lexis related to the specific anatomy of each speciality is presented in the form of a glossary. Then follows a short section about the specialised lexis of the physiology of each discipline, which will allow the reader to clearly find the most useful terms in a given speciality.

A more extensive section presents the key words of each medical speciality. These are classified into different sub-sections so as to facilitate readers' search (generalities, signs and symptoms, diseases, laboratory tests and exams, and treatments). The most frequent abbreviations and acronyms of each one of the 25 medical specialities come next. This section is particularly useful, both for reading and writing English-medium medical articles as well as for oral communication at conferences, for example.

The fifth and last section, entitled “The consultation”, specifically relates to the oral mode of communication/specialised doctor-patient interaction. It is divided into two sub-sections: the first one presents the most frequently used and idiomatic expressions in the patient's history taking in each speciality, and the second with those most commonly employed in the patient's physical examination.

In each one of these five sections, the most frequent orthographical variations between the British and the North American spellings (eg dyspnoea/dyspnea) and “latinate” plural forms (eg thrombi, nuclei) are presented. Along the same lines, specialised medical terms (eg dyspn(o)ea, pertussis) are presented along with their more popular equivalent (eg breathlessness, whooping cough).

The book is not a glossary of terms or a dictionary but a pedagogically-oriented bilingual compilation. It is much more than that. It is a reference tool for professional communication in medical English. Its very clear structure, identical for each discipline, will be very practical and useful for a wide range of health-related contexts. It will be particularly useful for interns, medical students in general, and physicians who do an internship or receive practical training in an English-speaking country.

To write this book, the authors, who both teach medical English at the Faculty of Medicine (University of Dijon, France), worked in close collaboration with specialists, generalists and hospital doctors. All the sections have been carefully read and cross-checked by experts in each one of the 25 specialities covered. It is thus a guarantee of the book quality, although it cannot pretend to exhaustively cover all specialities or all the expressions used during doctors/patients consultations. For example, dentistry, orthopedics/traumatology, neurosurgery, genetics and toxicology are absent. Nursing care could perhaps have been mentioned as well, although it is not a medical speciality per se. I also believe that it could have been better to dedicate a special entry to anatomy at the beginning of the book instead of referring to it for each of the 25 medical specialities dealt with. It is important, however, to put particular emphasis on the fact that the choices made corresponded to the experts' recommendations.

Because of its concise and very practically structured format, *L'Anglais des Spécialités Médicales* will complement online sources of information on medical English communication the authors themselves developed.

I am myself an EMP practitioner at the University of The Andes in Mérida (Venezuela) and, in spite of the fact that my students are Spanish-speaking medical graduates, I use this book in my EMP reading and writing classes and I find it most useful and practical. I strongly believe that it will also be a great asset in any EMP instructor's library, regardless of their own and their students' native language.

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