

About This Handbook

This Handbook is the third edition of a resource originally produced well over a decade ago. The last edition proved to be a valuable and much sought after document. In the intervening years since the last edition of the Handbook was produced the alcohol and other drugs field has changed, expanded and progressed in many ways. Hence, this new version covers expanded territory (such as polydrug use and coexisting mental health problems) and newer topic areas (such as gambling). Effort was directed at producing a resource document that was both user-friendly and also captured up-to-date, empirically sound health and medical advice. The information contained in the Handbook reflects evidence-based perspectives that are seen to be of practical value to the clinician in their day-to-day practice.

This Handbook has been produced with a very broad target audience in mind. Largely it will cater for the professional alcohol and other drugs needs of non-specialist medical practitioners and nurses. But it is also designed to be a useful practical tool for a wide range of other health and human services workers including psychologists, social workers and counsellors. We also envisage that it will be of value and interest to groups such as teachers, community workers and those with wider roles such as health promotion.

As a 'Handbook' this resource provides only a general summary overview of key issues pertinent to each of the topics covered. Readers are encouraged to seek more in-depth information from the various resources, links and contacts cited throughout the Handbook. Finally, it is important to note that the alcohol and other drugs field is particularly dynamic. While knowledge in any field is by necessity 'provisional', this may be considered to be especially the case in the changing and evolving area of alcohol and other drugs. The reader is therefore encouraged to use this resource as an entry point to the complex phenomenon of drug using behaviour and the challenging world of problem resolution.

Professor Ann M Roche
Handbook Project Head
Director
National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA)
Flinders University

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The production of this Handbook on alcohol and other drugs has involved the input, support and collaboration of many players and partners. The proposal for the Handbook came from the consortium that formed the Editorial Group, and this was largely formed at the instigation of Professor James Rankin. Professor Rankin is thanked for his enthusiasm and drive in getting this project off the ground. The other consortium members are thanked for their sound advice and support throughout the duration of the production of the Handbook. The consortium's Editorial Group included:

- Professor Ann Roche (Project Head)
- Associate Professor Robert Ali
- Professor Richard Mattick
- Professor Brian McAvoy
- Professor James Rankin

The Handbook also involved the input of a range of individuals and groups that are not immediately apparent and this included our Reference Group and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) who assisted in the piloting of the draft version of the document.

In addition, we would like to gratefully acknowledge the feedback received from many colleagues who contributed to various parts and stages of the process. Without the input of all of the above the production of this third edition of the Handbook would not have been possible.

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*Managing Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Problems:
A Pocket Guide for Physicians and Nurses*

Illustrations by Simon Kneebone.

List of Contributors

A wide range of contributors, each experts in specific areas, were involved in the writing of this Handbook. Some authors contributed whole chapters, others wrote smaller parts that were subsequently worked into larger sections or chapters. The authors who contributed to the Handbook in various ways are listed below.

Assoc. Professor Steve Allsop	Dr John Litt
Dr Michael Baigent	Professor Brian McAvoy
Dr Amanda Baker	Ms Annie Madden
Professor Bob Batey	Professor Andrea Mant
Dr Maggie Brady	Ms Heather Proudfoot
Dr Jan Copeland	Dr Alison Reid
Dr Kate Dolan	Professor Ann Roche
Professor Andrew Gilbert	Ms Jodie Shoobridge
Dr Tony Gill	Professor Tim Stockwell
Dr Linda Gowing	Dr Maree Teesson
Dr Paul Haber	Dr Libby Topp
Ms Jennifer Holmes	Professor Greg Whelan
Assoc. Professor Gary Hulse	Professor Jason White
Dr Nicole Lee	Dr Adam Winstock
Dr Patrick Lenehan	Dr Alex Wodak
Dr Nick Lintzeris	Dr Chris Wurm

In addition to the authors and the overseeing Consortium, an important role was played by a team of NCETA staff who worked extensively on the editing of the Handbook to ensure its accuracy and consistency in terms of style and presentation. The final editorial team mainly comprised Dr Carolyn Edmonds, Jodie Shoobridge and Professor Ann Roche.

In addition, a broader technical team also worked in the production of the Handbook and this group included Laura Jackson, Niola Curtis, Veronica Freund, Jane Malyschko, Joanne McDonald, Jodie Pearce, Sue Rayner, Chelsea Todd and Pamela Wright.

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