

## Book reviews

*Energy-Yielding Macronutrients and Energy Metabolism in Sports Nutrition*. Judy A. Driskell and Ira Wolinsky: New York, NY. CRC Press \$89.95.

This is the 19th book in the CRC series on *Nutrition in Exercise and Sport*. Unfortunately I did not begin reading this book with an open mind because I had reviewed two other books from the CRC *Nutrition in Exercise and Sport* series. I found them over-priced for the information (and misinformation) they offered and so was unable to recommend them to those who wish to improve their knowledge of this area of nutritional sciences. After a shaky start, my confidence in the material presented in this current book improved chapter by chapter. The book is divided into three sections, namely: The energy-yielding nutrients; Supplements containing macronutrient derivatives; and Physiological aspects of energy metabolism. There are five chapters in the first section and four in each of the other two. Two introductory chapters preface these three sections. Presumably the main introductory chapter, which offers an overview on human bioenergetics and nutrition, was intended to set the biochemical background to the topics which follow. However, this particular chapter does not give the knowledgeable reader confidence in the author's familiarity with the topic and would confuse those trying to update their understanding of energy metabolism during exercise. For example, lactate, not hydrogen ions, is presented as the cause of fatigue and statements such as: 'lactate production is inhibited when oxygen levels rise' are offered with confidence and without qualification. These and many more could be used as 'true or false' questions for undergraduate seminars or multiple-choice examination questions.

As might be expected, the first section contains chapters on carbohydrate, fat and protein and their contributions to energy metabolism at rest and during exercise. In the chapter on proteins and amino acids, the author appears to have confused pounds with kg and so the recommendations are offered as g protein/pound body mass rather than as g protein/kg body mass. This leads to recommendations of protein intakes that are twice as great as those in the specialist literature on protein requirements for sportsmen and -women. However, this may not be an unfortunate error but a reflection of the author's views about the protein needs of athletes. This would be consistent with the views expressed in the chapter in the second section of the book that deals with protein and amino acid supplements. The chapter promotes the value of protein supplements over protein from commonly available foods with very little evidence to support the claims. The other three chapters in this second section of the book describe the contributions of carbohydrate, fat and creatine supplements to energy metabolism and performance during exercise. They are well written and are based on the evidence from the

relevant research literature. The chapter on creatine is a well documented review of the literature on this the most widely used supplement in sport today.

The final section of the book deals with four topics under the general heading of: 'Physiological aspects of energy metabolism'. The first is on the nutritional implications of sex differences in energy metabolism. This is an informative chapter that has particularly important messages for those of us who use both men and women in our studies on exercise metabolism. It also reminds us to be more cautious when offering nutritional recommendations for sports-women from metabolic studies on men. The other three chapters are also informative and provide the non-specialist with a good background to the topics of age differences in response to exercise, the regulation of body weight with reference to weight gain and weight loss. I would dip into these chapters with confidence should I have to write or lecture on aspects of these topics.

The editors attempt a summary of the topics covered in the book but it is such an enormous task that all they manage is a few descriptive sentences on each chapter. They should have offered their own insights on the main topics and referenced the relevant chapters as appropriate. Clearly, a book of this type depends heavily on the quality and knowledge of the contributing authors. The editors have succeeded in attracting, with only a couple of exceptions, active researchers as authors, who have written informative chapters with clarity and authority. In summary, I would be delighted if my students had a good working knowledge of the material offered in most of the chapters in this book.

Clyde Williams

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*The Diet Dilemma - Explained*. Rosemary Stanton. Allen and Unwin. 2000 (2nd ed.). Softback. £8.99. ISBN 1 86508 256 2.

Written as a book for: 'people who are tired of gimmicks and want to know what a normal weight is', this is an interesting and informative book by one of Australia's leading nutritionists. The first edition of this book appeared in 1991 and has since been updated to include information on the many new fad diets that have subsequently appeared. Rosemary Stanton has written several books on healthy eating and is involved in the Gutbuster programme, a weight-loss programme targeted at men that has been highly successful in Australia. She is therefore well qualified to write this book and has drawn on her vast experience in the weight-loss field to make the book

relevant and informative. The content is logically presented, covering why diets often don't work, definitions and causes of obesity, and the tactics used by the ever-expanding slimming industry to entice people to try various weight-loss products. There is an excellent section on ingredients used in weight-loss products, as well as summaries of popular diets that have been rated both for the diet itself and the theory behind it. These include 'golden oldies' such as the Atkins diet (now enjoying a revival) and the Beverley Hills diet, along with more recent fads and information on some of the more sensible weight-loss programmes. It is not always clear why a diet receives a particular rating, although it is obvious which ones the author favours and which she believes are absolute rubbish! After covering other weight-loss methods, including acupuncture and slimming drugs, the book moves on to how weight loss can be achieved sensibly. There is also a section on the overweight child, dealing sensitively with this topic. The nutritional information offered in the latter sections of the book is sound and follows accepted dietary guidelines, offering practical advice on how to adapt an existing diet to follow these guidelines. While men are included as a target audience throughout the book, it is more likely to appeal to women.

Although biased towards an Australian audience, this book has relevance elsewhere, including the UK. The writing style is a little complicated in places, requiring a well-educated and informed reader to make the best use of the information presented. Despite providing information on a complex problem for which a vast number of solutions, good and bad, have been offered, the book tries hard not to patronise the reader who may have in the past resorted to such methods. Instead, it explains why such methods do not work in a matter-of-fact way. At the back

of the book is a list of other useful books, including recipe books.

From a professional viewpoint, the main criticism of this book is that although there is a lot of excellent information presented, it is not referenced. This is perhaps not surprising since it is aimed at a lay audience. However, for the book to be tempting to academics and health professionals, some detail on sources of information, particularly for the sections that deal with the success rates of various treatments, would have been useful. It is frustrating that, despite mentioning the research studies that have been carried out on various products, further detail on what these are is not provided, leaving the interested reader to do their own research. With the vast amount of information on diet that is available, this would be a time-consuming and difficult task and it is a shame that this aspect has been overlooked. A list of references would have been particularly helpful for the section on ingredients used for slimming products, which covers products such as chitosan, kelp and chromium picolinate. Inclusion of references would also broaden the appeal of this book to a wider range of professionals involved in weight management, who are looking for a more evidence-based approach. Despite this drawback, this is a useful reference book for health professionals, and one that could be recommended to patients. It is particularly of relevance to any clinician who has been faced with a patient wanting information on the vast range of miracle cures for obesity and for anyone who wants to understand the appeal of the weight-loss market. It would also be a useful reference in libraries. At £8.99 this is a well-priced book offering good value for money.

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