Christopher Blair, DO
Software Review Editor

Stedman's Electronic Medical Dictionary

Programmers: In-house production team. System requirements: (For Microsoft Windows 3.1 or later): 486, 1 MB RAM, 13.5 MB hard disk space. (For Macintosh OS System 7.0 or later): 680X0 or Power PC, 3 MB RAM, 15 MB hard disk space. Can be used with WordPerfect 2.02, 2.1, 3.0, 3.1, and 3.5 for Macintosh; Microsoft Word 5.0, 5.1, 6.0, or 6.0l for Macintosh. CD-ROM version available. Williams & Wilkins, 351 W Camden St, Baltimore, MD 21201-2436; (800) 527-5597; $79.95. E-mail address: custserv@wwilkins.com.

As a print reference, *Stedman's Medical Dictionary* has long been a standby of the medical profession for spelling, pronunciation, and general citation for the men and women in the various fields of medicine. The latest incarnation of this stalwart reference is *Stedman's Electronic Medical Dictionary* 3.0, available for incorporation into the home or office personal computer. Formatted after the 26th print edition, this computer version is available for Windows or Macintosh platforms, as well as diskette or CD-ROM format. Also currently available is *Stedman's Plus 4.0*, a tried-and-true medical and pharmaceutical spellchecker designed specifically to work in concert with many major word processing programs. (See following review.) These programs include Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, and Lotus AmiPro and WordPro.

Stedman's Electronic Medical Dictionary is just what you might expect from a medical reference created to exploit the capabilities of the PC: all the traditional benefits of spelling, pronunciation, and usage combined with advanced search functions, word and phrase associations, and useful, well thought-out hyperlink references. The program allows for immediate access via programmable "hot keys," which enables users to call up the dictionary "on-the-fly" while working on a document.

Search functions can be used to seek out a word or phrase by a variety of criteria. More than 100,000 words may be explored via instant access, or by keyboarding only part of the word. This "wildcard" search turns up on screen all combinations in the dictionary. Similarly, a "defacto" search can be conducted by keying in a portion of the word's definition. This feature is especially helpful when definitions—but not the word—can be remembered. A *history* function keeps a running track of words that have previously been looked up; a *replace* function allows users to pour instantaneous entries from the dictionary into any document. Lastly, Boolean-type search functions can be performed.

Steadman's Electronic Medical Dictionary can be customized to suit an individual's style of usage as well as aesthetics. This customization extends to the "hot key" function, which may be changed to suit each user's choice of keystrokes, choice of color for the hyperlinks, and text font size (particularly useful with a smaller screen). Other more aesthetic preference settings include the actual layout of the screen itself as pertains to whether the word lists and definitions appear above, below, or side by side; exactly which available information is displayed (word root, pronunciations, definitions); and how much desktop space is allocated to the dictionary. *Stedman's Electronic Medical Dictionary* is designed to work alongside any word processing program or other project, as well as serving as an outstanding stand-alone program.

Although negative aspects of this program are scarce, a few do exist. Infrequent editorial oversights on spacing were noted, and the addition of the audio multimedia pronunciations rather than the more traditional text-based approach would have been welcomed. Otherwise, the program seems exceptional and a positive extension to any medical professional's computer library.

Stedman's Plus Spellchecker

System requirements: Same as that for Stedman's Electronic Medical Encyclopedia Price: $99.95.

Rather than functioning as a stand-alone program, *Stedman's Plus 4.0* is designed to work in concert with any number of popular word processing programs as a medical and pharmaceutical spellchecker. More than 343,000 terms are included in this powerful—yet easy-to-use—spellchecker, including names of contemporary instruments and procedures. Multiple medical specialties are represented, such as orthopedics, cardiology, oncology, obstetrics/gynecology, radiology, and pathology. Terminology specific to genetics, statistics, and epidemiology is also entailed in the spellchecker. Perhaps its most appealing feature is its "silent partner" functionality that requires no opening of additional programs.

Although *Stedman's Plus* works well

with various word processing programs, WordPerfect 5.1 (or later) is especially compatible as special features have been created for the spellchecker in this instance (checking for capitalized drug generic name and any lower case trade name, for example). The "chaining dictionary" also activated with WordPerfect 5.1 (or later) enables several dictionaries to be linked and provides for a more customized spellchecker. Finally, irregular terms or phrases, such as those that may include single letters, words with numbers or irregular case, or hyphenated or required capitalization, may be ignored by setting the preference features accordingly.

Mosby's Medical Encyclopedia for Health Professionals

Credits: Darlene Como, executive editor; Rakha Anad-Singh, project manager; Laurie Sparks, senior developmental editor; Barbara Carroll, assistant editor. System requirements: (For Windows 3.1 or later): 386/25 MHz processor or higher, CD-ROM drive, 256 color monitor, SVGA sound card, 4 MB RAM, 4 MB hard disk space . Mosby Yearbook, Inc, 11830 Westline Industrial Dr, Attn: Order Services, St Louis, MO 63146; (800) 633-6699; $59.95.

In the current breakneck pace of computer software development, many production companies seem complacent with developing reputations of quantity over quality. This trend has become especially apparent in the arena of educational titles, where often the user gains far more from learning how to get a program up and running properly than from the content of the software itself. Not so with the new *Mosby's Medical Encyclopedia for Health Professionals.*

The ability to move with ease throughout the various areas of the program is central to its effectiveness as a reference and learning tool. The program includes both alphabetical tabs and a comprehensive search function, which allows for easy access to any of the topics. Cut and paste tools, electronic book marks for insertion, and print information are available with a click of the mouse. This accessibility makes gathering information easy and fun.

Mosby's Medical Encyclopedia for Health Professionals is specifically formulated for use by persons in various healthcare fields. Yet it has the benefit of defining medical terms in plain English, as well as including correct audio pronunciations of the medical terms. The straightforward design entails detailed illustrations, which also serve as a useful reference resource. The extensive appendices feature laboratory values, drug interactions, diagnosis-related groups, and assessment guides.

However, a few aspects of the program—such as the inclusion of more audio pronunciations—could be improved. All things considered, however, this program (particularly the anatomy atlas) serves as an excellent reference resource for the healthcare student and the seasoned professional, while also stimulating those young minds of persons who may be interested in a career in the healthcare field.

Microscopic Anatomy

Programmers: Thomas Hollinger, PhD, content author; Richard Rathe, MD, and Tim Garren, BS, software design; Office of Medical Information, University of Florida, image production; Charles Poulton and Gene Cornwall, technical assistants; Tim Garren, Patrick Joiner, and Walt Szalva, CD-ROM development; Victor Pesqueria and Jonathan Seymour, MD, production management; Bill Bradley, editorial assistance; Diana Pray, copy editing; Jill Dygert, CD packaging and design. System requirements: (For Windows 3.1 or later): 386 processor or higher, 16-bit color, 8 MB RAM, 9 MB hard disk space. (For Macintosh 7.1 or later): 68030 processor or higher, 16-bit color, 8 MB RAM, no hard disk space necessary. Gold Standard Multimedia, Inc, 235 S Main St, Suite 206, Gainesville, FL 32601-6585; (800) 375-0943; $99.

The latest in the educational multimedia series from Gold Standard Multimedia takes the study of anatomy literally under the microscope. Patterned after the histology curriculum of the University of Florida School of Medicine, *Microscopic Anatomy* is much more than a mere collection of photomicrographs. Rather, it combines the many facets of the study of microscopic anatomy into a single, more digestible study aid.

For many students and medical professionals alike, the study of micropathology is a difficult one. Perhaps even more daunting than the study of micropathology is the tedious nature of histologic examination of the slides with long hours spent confined to the microscopy laboratory. Although it seems doubtful that any tool could make mastering the subject easy, *Microscopic Anatomy* does take strides in that direction. For example, it begins with an in-depth tutorial covering the use of the common light microscope. This tutorial includes a 5-minute movie (which can be viewed in whole or part) that describes in an elementary fashion everything from light physics to the care and use of the microscope. This information serves as a sound fundamental basis on which to build knowledge gained from the tissue samples contained within the program.

Most of the elements are categorized by different tissue types, with 20 different categories from which to choose. More than 1200 digitized images of fixed and stained tissue preparations are available. For example, by selecting from the "Bone and Connective Tissue" or "Urinary System" menu, users can select from various slides. From this menu users can select cell type, species, or method of preparation. A hematoxylin and eosin preparation of human cardiac muscle, for example, is easily contrasted with a toludine blue preparation of the muscularis layer of a small intestine section from a rat. The slides themselves may then be viewed at two different zoom levels or may be expanded to full screen. When viewed at a reduced size, the slide is accompanied by an outline-type descriptor, as well as a more detailed text box describing what can—and should—be seen in the particular image. An occasional electron photomicrograph is provided, albeit in only a few of the available categories, and then only as a single image.

True to its education orientation, *Microscopic Anatomy* includes exten-

(continued on page 22)