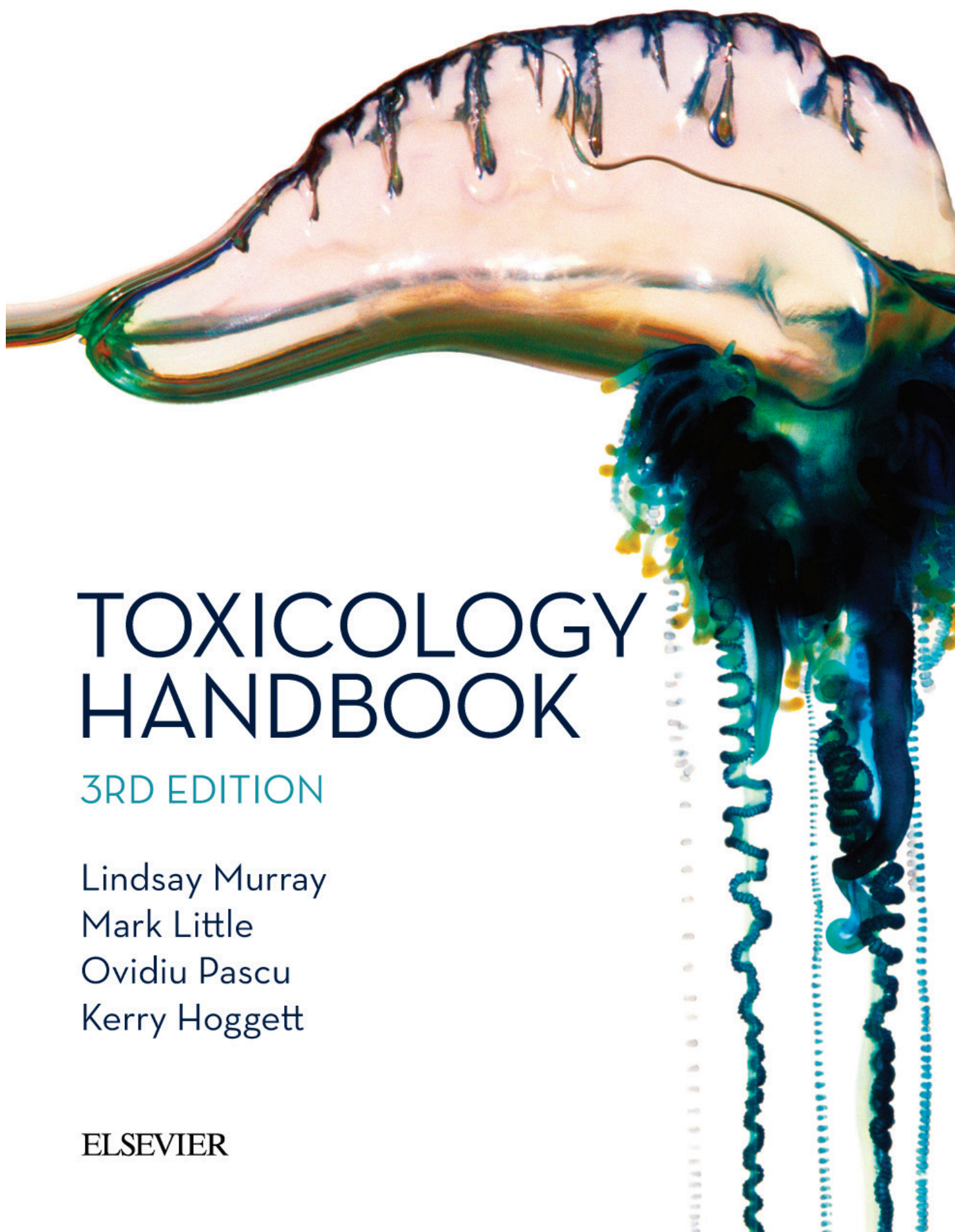


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TOXICOLOGY HANDBOOK

3RD EDITION

Lindsay Murray
Mark Little
Ovidiu Pascu
Kerry Hoggett

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BOOK

Toxicology Handbook, Third Edition

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FOREWORD

This is the third edition of the *Toxicology Handbook* and confirms clinical toxicology as a sub-specialty in Australasia.

Less than 20 years ago a small cohort of emergency doctors independently sought overseas sub-specialty training in toxicology so that they could bring a higher level of expertise to the management of this heterogeneous and vulnerable group of patients in Australasian emergency departments. They joined a small and informal collection of clinical pharmacologists, intensivists and paediatricians to provide telephone advice across the country through the National Poisons Centre system.

Within a few years the collaboration flourished and they started local training programs, implemented innovative patient-centred models of care and coordinated research. Wider networks involving rural and remote clinicians, psychiatry, drug and alcohol services and occupational medicine were also formed.

It is now axiomatic that we should endeavour to deliver clinical care that is evidence based. There is also clear evidence that patient experience and outcomes are superior in organisations that have a clear and inspirational vision, unambiguous objectives aligned to that vision and clinicians who work in teams with a philosophy of continuous improvement. This handbook is written by clinicians who have worked in such a way. They have designed the content and format of this book to allow the easy dissemination of their expertise and experience for the benefit of patients beyond their own hospitals. It is an authentic clinical handbook and not just a text for the shelf or study. It continues the clear and consistent format of previous editions. The clinical approach is based on risk assessment and enables evidence-based and pragmatic management tailored to the individual needs of patients. This is a key element in progressing the ideal of optimal care for the poisoned patient irrespective of location.

The vision has always been to deliver patient care that is safe, effective, personal, timely and efficient. I believe this handbook represents a practical step to deliver on this vision at an individual patient level and as part of a wider system of care.

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PREFACE

The *Toxicology Handbook* was originally conceived as a distillation of the collective experience of the clinical toxicologists of the West Australian Toxicology Service. It was written with the aim of producing a useful but concise bedside text to assist the clinician in treating the acutely poisoned patient in whatever setting they might be practising within Australasia or elsewhere. With this in mind the authors made every effort not only to provide the necessary factual information but to train the user to adopt a rigorous and structured risk assessment-based approach to decision making in the context of clinical toxicology. The second edition provided an opportunity to expand the coverage of toxins and incorporate changes in management informed by new research.

Feedback from users of the first two editions of the handbook has validated the practical utility of the structured risk assessment-based approach to the management of poisoning and encouraged us to retain this approach for the third edition. This latest edition necessarily incorporates important information regarding poisoning from recently marketed pharmaceuticals. It also incorporates important modifications in management advice, particularly in the area of envenoming, informed by recently published clinical research.

Two of the original authors of the *Toxicology Handbook* were not available to produce the third edition as their careers have since evolved in other exciting directions. However, the contributions of Frank Daly and Mike Cadogan live on in the third edition in a very real way. The unique qualities of these two exceptional doctors provided the conceptual framework and clinical expertise on which the *Toxicology Handbook* still rests. We dedicate the third edition to Frank Daly and Mike Cadogan together with our patients, who continue to instruct on a daily basis and remind us just how much we have yet to learn.

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