

apparent that adverse reaction reports also provide good insights into the environment in which medicines are used, the risk factors that might lead to serious adverse effects and the effect of advice and guidelines in practice.

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## Doctor Colenso, I presume: An account of missionary medical practice in New Zealand in the midnineteenth century

Illustrated by the work of the Rev. William Colenso FLS FRS in the Wairarapa and Hawke's Bay

Ian St George

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Ian St George's tribute to William Colenso's medical work was published to mark the bicentenary in 2011 of its subject's birth. Colenso is presented as a nineteenth century polymath, described by the author as a 'printer, missionary, explorer, politician, botanist, educationalist, liberation theologian—and importantly herein, healer and dispenser of medicines'. The extent of his medical involvement is highlighted by Colenso's claim in 1897 that at one time he had the 'most complete surgery in NZ'.

The text consists of lengthy extracts from Colenso's writing, both published and unpublished, and from secondary sources, with linking passages by the author. This is underpinned by extensive footnotes, contextualising the story. St George outlines Colenso's medical education, such as it was, and his practice while employed by the Church Missionary Society from 1834 to 1852. It also includes details of his own ill health, and his opposition to the consumption of tobacco and alcohol.

Colenso's entry in the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* makes no mention of Colenso's role as a healer. Ian St George's work is a welcome corrective to this omission.

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