

INTRODUCTION

The physiology and pharmacology of the lower urinary tract

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Over the past 10 years, the clinical management of urological problems has changed greatly. Whereas in the past, nearly 75% of patients referred to a urologist would be treated surgically, now only about one patient in 15 requires surgery. This quiet revolution has come about through the introduction of effective drugs over this period, and thus represents a major success for the discipline of pharmacology in providing a basis for the commitment of the pharmaceutical industry. This series of review articles provides an update on developments in this important field and summarises the material presented by invited experts at the third *BJP* Symposium 'The Physiology and Pharmacology of the Lower Urinary Tract'. This was a joint symposium organised by the Society for Basic Urology, URODOC and the *British Journal of Pharmacology*.

The first set of reviews deal with human disease and our present understanding of the neural pathways involved in

controlling urinary storage and expulsion in man and animals and the ways in which these mechanisms may be disrupted by disease and trauma.

Further articles describe animal models that mimic different aspects of human pathology, and discuss possible drug targets that may lead to new developments in therapeutics. The final section deals with pharmacological aspects of the treatment of sexual dysfunction, which has become a major therapeutic area.

This series of reviews should provide a critical guide for researchers new to this rapidly developing field, in both academia and industry. We hope that it will stimulate new research suitable for publication in the *British Journal of Pharmacology*, which has a reputation for excellence in this area.

The Organisers

