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Book Review

Meyler's Side Effects of Drugs, Twelfth Edition
M.N.G. Dukes (Ed.)
Elsevier Science Publishers BV, Amsterdam, * 1992.
ISBN: 0-444-98524-8.
Price US\$297.00 Dfl.475.00.

More than 40 years after its foundation by the late Professor Leo Meyler of Groningen, Side Effects of Drugs, now in its 12th Edition, is a unique encyclopaedia of adverse drug reactions. It provides an up-to-date and critical review of information from the world literature and from national monitoring systems over the last four years since the 11th Edition was published. Under the able supervision of Dr. Dukes, an international team of expert authors and co-editors have up-dated the book to conform with the goal that Leo Meyler originally and correctly set, namely that of serving the clinician and the investigator.

The book comprises 51 chapters, each dealing with a therapeutically or pharmacologically related drug grouping; the data are arranged in the form of monographs, each dealing with a drug group as a whole or with one of its primary representatives, and supplemented by specific data on individual members of the group insofar as their adverse effects deviate from this general pattern. Each chapter is fully referenced to the literature. Finally, there is a short presentation

on 'International drug monitoring' by Professor I.R. Edwards, Medical Director on behalf of the WHO Collaborating Centre for International Drug Monitoring. There is also a list of the national centres participating in this scheme. There is a comprehensive index of drugs and an index of side effects.

I have already had cause to consult this book, in particular the very comprehensive chapter by Peter De Smet on 'Drugs used in non-orthodox medicine'. I mention this in passing because the volume is probably the most complete and up-to-date reference source now available on adverse drug events. To review such a book is really equivalent to asking someone to review the assembled works of Shakespeare, for, in its context, it is quite outstanding and unique.

May I add, however, that as I commented when I reviewed the 11th Edition, there is still the matter of the reference citations. I am pleased to see that De Smet and some other chapter authors have listed full references. It is attention to such small points of detail that adds to perfection.

P.F. D'Arcy

* The book is available from: Elsevier, P.O. Box 1991, 1000 BZ, Amsterdam, The Netherlands or in the USA/Canada from Elsevier Science Publishing Co., Inc., P.O. Box 882, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159, U.S.A.

School of Pharmacy
The Queen's University of Belfast
Northern Ireland, U.K.