

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of Disposition of Toxic Drugs and Chemicals in Man, Third Edition

REFERENCE: Baselt, R. C. and Cravey, R. H., *Disposition of Toxic Drugs and Chemicals in Man*, 3rd ed., Year Book Medical Publishers, Inc., 35 E. Wacker Dr., Chicago, IL 60601, 1989, 875 pp.

This third edition of Baselt's indispensable compilation of data summaries and references has several welcome changes. First and foremost is the addition of another author, R. Cravey, with whom Baselt has collaborated frequently in the past. The book itself has now expanded from a 15 by 22.5-cm page size to 17.5 by 25.5 cm, with a clearer, more legible type font. The total pages have increased from 795 to 875 to accommodate a 17% increase in monographs, and 56 additional substances are discussed. The familiar red cover now bears the structure of morphine rather than that of digoxin.

Despite these changes, all of which are improvements, the internal format remains the same as that of the previous editions. Each substance is discussed in a two- to four-page monograph. The structure is shown as well as the pharmacokinetic values for T_{1/2}, V_d, and F_b, when available, together with the pK_a values. A typical monograph includes discussions of occurrence and usage of the substance, blood concentrations, metabolism and excretion, toxicity, and analysis. Structures of metabolites are shown when appropriate, as are representative tissue concentrations from cases of fatalities. References are given for the data presented, including references to analytical methods.

Although many of the old monographs appear to be relatively unchanged, most show signs of updating, since references from the literature of 1982 (the date of the second edition) and later appear. The most recent references appear to be from 1987, although one to a 1988 paper was found (page 55). As might be expected, the cocaine, THC, and morphine monographs are augmented by data from more recent studies.

The new additions to this book are welcome. A number of drugs are added, including the newer benzodiazepines. Some, such as cyclosporine, are primarily of clinical interest. Other additions include solvents which are important in occupational or environmental health. All of these newer inclusions are useful.

Two weaknesses of this volume are carried along from the earlier editions. The pharmacokinetic values are not referenced. Thus when they differ from those of other sources, it is not possible to return to the original citation for verification. In addition, a relatively large portion of the references is not easily verifiable. Some are abstracts of presentations

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at meetings or are listed as "personal communication." While it is true that the type of data presented, particularly data related to fatalities, is not always available in archival literature, some caution should be exercised and communicated to the reader when using such data.

The strengths of this volume far outweigh the weaknesses. Other than an extremely brief preface which welcomes Cravey as the coauthor, there are no frills. Except for a simple table of contents listing the substances alphabetically and an index which similarly lists the substances by a variety of synonyms, the entire book is devoted to the business described by its title. It is well bound and should withstand the frequent use it is certain to receive from busy toxicologists.