

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of *A Primer of Drug Action*, Fifth Edition

REFERENCE: Julien, R. M., *A Primer of Drug Action*, 5th ed., W. H. Freeman and Co., 41 Madison Ave., 37th Floor, New York, NY 10010, 1988, 364 pages, \$14.95.

A Primer of Drug Action is a concise, nontechnical guide to the disposition, actions, uses, and side effects of psychoactive drugs in man. In short, this is pharmacology for the layman and is an excellent text for on-the-job training for analysts in training in forensic toxicology and criminalistics laboratories who have no formal training in pharmacology. The section on drug absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination is exceptionally well illustrated and written. Dr. Julien covers sedatives, tranquilizers, opiates, stimulants, alcohol, and psychedelic drugs, among others.

The author was an ideal candidate to write this book. He has a doctorate in pharmacology, with teaching experience in the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics at the California College of Medicine, University of California at Irvine (UCI), and is also an M.D. with a specialty in anesthesiology. During his years at UCI he was often called by both prosecuting and defense attorneys as an expert witness in cases involving the effects of drugs on humans.

A Primer of Drug Action, now in its fifth edition, is printed on high-quality paper and is available in paperback form to make it more available to the public. I recommend this book for all forensic toxicologists and criminalists who have little training in pharmacology.

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