

**Medicinal Chemistry: Today and Tomorrow.** Edited by Mikio Yamazaki. International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, Blackwell Science Ltd., Oxford. 1997. x + 278 pp. 19.5 × 23 cm. ISBN 0-632-04272-9. £55.00.

This book contains the proceedings of the IUPAC sponsored Asian Federation for Medicinal Chemistry (AFMC) International Medicinal Chemistry Symposium (AIMECS 95) held in Tokyo, Japan, September 3-8, 1995. The papers represent a broad cross section of topics relevant to medicinal chemistry, including natural products, total synthesis, receptor studies, drug delivery, drug metabolism, SAR studies, and discussions of orphan drug development in Europe, the United States, and Japan. As this book consists of symposium proceedings, editing seems to have been minimal. The papers appear to have been printed as received, so in some cases there are a lot of typographical errors. Many of the papers describe research that has been published elsewhere in the last several years and is therefore not new information. The papers on receptors (cytokine, glutamate, prostanoid, and integrin adhesion) collect information from a number of sources and may be useful as general background resources. The series of three papers on the status of orphan drug development in Europe, the United States, and Japan was interesting and summarizes information not typically encountered in a medicinal chemistry symposium. In summary, this book contains a number of interesting papers from the 1995 International Medicinal Chemistry Symposium. It will probably be of greatest interest to attendees of the symposium.

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**Designer Drugs Directory.** By Karel Valter and Philippe Arrizabalaga. Edited by Jean-Claude Landry. Elsevier Science, Lausanne, Switzerland. 1998. 212 pp. 17 × 25 cm. ISBN 0-444-20525-X. \$154.00.

The title of this book is somewhat of a misnomer. The term "designer drug" as originally coined by toxicologist Gary Henderson was meant to apply to synthetic opiates that had been produced in clandestine laboratories in an effort to circumvent the drug laws that existed prior to 1986. Prior to that date, proscribed substances had to be explicitly named and described in the law. Thus, a prototype drug might be a controlled substance and formally described in the law, while the addition of methyl groups, aromatic fluorines, etc., gave rise to a plethora of equally pernicious or even more dangerous analogues that technically were not illegal substances.

The controlled substances analogue act of 1986 largely remedied that loophole in the drug laws.

More recently, however, the definition of designer drugs has become less precise, as the authors note, and the term is now often applied to any illicit drug that is used recreationally. The title of this book would fit that definition.

The bulk of this book consists of listings for 107 different drugs, grouped by drug classifications according to 10 categories: psychotomimetics (3 chemical types), cannabinoids, PCP and its congeners, deliriants (antimuscarinics), CNS stimulants, synthetic opiates, methaqualone and its analogues, and GHB ( $\gamma$ -hydroxybutyrate). The various drugs included in each category have listed their IUPAC name, various common names, synonyms, and street names. Their CA registry number, CA name, the frequency of occurrence on the illicit market (e.g., rare, frequent, etc.), and other information such as dosage, duration of action, and any toxic effects that are known are also provided. A short description of each particular drug is usually offered, along with references where analysis methods such as MS or NMR have been reported. The subject index is reasonably complete, and if one hears the street name for one of the drugs, that term is usually in the index pointing to the entry with the chemical or common name.

The authors have attempted to provide coverage on all the drugs that are presently available, particularly on the rave scene that is so popular today in Europe. In addition, however, they have included analogues that they believe might become popular in the future. In most cases, their selection has been based on at least one seizure of the compound or its precursor(s), although it is not clear that in every example the drug represents a serious potential drug abuse threat. Some of the listed drugs were popular 10-15 years ago but have been only rarely seen on the illicit market since then. Their predictions of future drug problems may be more a matter of chance economics, although the clandestine chemists of today seem so literature savvy that some of them might well be tipped off to good "products" by a volume such as this one.

The real value of this directory lies in having key references and data for a given compound all collected together in one place. Therefore, the book will be particularly useful to forensic scientists and analytical laboratories, to toxicology laboratories, and occasionally as a resource for attorneys involved in clandestine drug cases. For most practicing medicinal chemists, the high cost makes this book one to pass over.

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