

Book Reviews

New Drug Discovery & Development. By Daniel Lednicer (National Cancer Institute). Wiley-Interscience, Hoboken, NJ. 2007. xii + 190 pp. 16 × 24 cm. \$94.95. ISBN 0-470-00750-8.

The history of science is filled with people who made observations, drew conclusions, and then moved on to ask the next good question. The pharmacological sciences are no exception. In this book, the author takes us into the laboratories of biomedical scientists who isolated drugs from natural sources and then attempted to synthesize them, or into the laboratories of medicinal chemists who looked at existing drugs and their biochemical targets and sought to design new, more effective ones. The underlying physiology, pathology, and biochemistry of the disease or condition that a drug treats are developed for each class of drugs discussed, as are pragmatic pharmaceutical issues that limited their utility. The reasoning behind the direction that drug development took is woven into this narrative, as is the inevitable serendipity that took place. The author takes pains to credit the individual scientists or laboratories responsible for a given stride in the walk/run toward marketing a pharmaceutical. In the final chapter, the drug develop-

ment pipeline is described. Readers should consider reading this chapter first, as well as again at the end, to provide context for everything between.

Written for the “informed layman”, who is described as having, minimally, a background in the sciences, the book includes an appendix for review of organic chemical structures. It is doubtful that most nonchemists, with or without a background in the sciences, could navigate the medicinal chemistry in this book without it. Indeed, chemists reading this book who are a bit rusty on their organic chemistry might want to spend some time in the appendix before tackling this very interesting book, or simply skip much of the structural chemistry and still enjoy the history.

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