

Book Reviews

Pharmacology and dental therapeutics

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The publication of a third edition of this text only 10 years after the first is a reflection on how the subject of pharmacology continues to develop rapidly. Regular updates in this field are therefore most welcome. The retirement of two of the original authors has resulted in the recruitment of two new authors whose reputations are well-established. In addition, both have experience of teaching dental undergraduates thus insuring that the text continues to target the primary audience.

Twenty-seven well-structured and highly readable chapters cover a comprehensive range of pharmacological topics of relevance to Dentistry. It would seem that all chapters have been revised and updated and many completely rewritten. As in the previous editions, the text covers both basic and applied pharmacology. General pharmacological principles, pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics, and the mechanisms underlying pain and

inflammation are addressed in a very thoughtful and comprehensible manner. There follows a series of eight or so chapters related to the pharmacological aspects of individual body systems. Drugs used extensively in dentistry, and in particular, local and general anesthetic agents are covered in detail. Of particular note are two excellent chapters on antiseptics and disinfectants, and anti-microbial chemotherapy agents, which are both contemporary and comprehensive. Two further chapters, 'Treatments for common dental conditions' and 'Pharmacological control of dental caries and periodontal disease' provide useful and accessible summaries of topics, which are difficult to obtain elsewhere. Other miscellaneous chapters include prescribing and the law, drug interactions and adverse effects, medical emergencies and drug abuse.

In addition to appropriate and meaningful tables and figures, each chapter has a very useful 'boxed' key facts section. At first glance the further reading sections may appear somewhat limited, however the recommended reading is highly focussed and relevant.

I have no doubt that this text will continue to serve as excellent course textbook for undergraduates. Likewise postgraduates and teachers of pharmacology to students of dentistry or allied courses will gain significantly from its content.