

## REVIEWS

**Legal Medicine Annual.** Edited by CYRIL H. WECHT, M.D., J.D. Appleton-Century-Crofts, 440 Park Ave., New York, NY 10016, 1969. 442 pp. 16.7 × 24.4 cm. Price \$14.00.

This book contains 22 monographs by 26 authors covering various aspects of forensic medicine. The largest part of the book is devoted to a discussion of professional liability and forensic toxicology. The remainder of the book is rounded out with a discussion of criminal responsibility, organ transplantation, and abortion laws.

Two chapters that deserve special mention are: *Chapter 8*, dealing with the preparation for trial in drug liability cases. The author gives an excellent discussion of how probing an attorney's inquiry can be into the facts and responsibilities for adverse drug reactions.

*Chapter 5* gives a clear overview of the medicolegal problems of hospital liability and the extent to which the courts are forcing hospitals to exercise increasing control over medical staff conduct. While this chapter focuses on potential liability of the medical staff, it is clear that members of the paramedical staff, such as, clinical pharmacists and nurses can face the same types of potential liability.

A book of this nature would not be of interest to the pharmaceutical scientist or pharmacy practitioner unless he has a strong interest in medicolegal problems.

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**Physician's Book Compendium.** Edited by MAX CELNIK. Physician's Book Compendium, Inc., 25 West 45th St., New York, NY 10036, 1969. xxvi + 846 pp. 17 × 23.5 cm. Price \$29.50.

While the idea behind the "Physician's Book Compendium" of compiling into one source all books from the medical field and giving pertinent bibliographic information is sound and would have useful applications, the product of this idea falls considerably short of its goal, as stated in the Preface, of being "an indispensable reference volume."

Probably the first objectionable feature that the user would notice is the inserts of business reply cards, provided for ordering books. The thickness of these inserts, and their location interspersed throughout the text, makes flipping pages difficult. The next annoyance is the numerous pages of advertisements scattered throughout the volume; they seem to be out of place in a book of this type. The very fact that this book costs nearly thirty dollars and is filled with ads, in itself, might be objectionable to some purchasers of this book.

Had both of these aforementioned materials been placed at the beginning or end of the book, the usefulness of the book would have been somewhat increased, as well as bettering its appearance.

The paragraph summaries, which are not provided for all books, read like the publicity flyers sent out by the publishers. No attempt could be discerned to evaluate or critique any book, an omission which certainly detracts from the value of the compendium. This omission is particularly significant with regard to the older books.

With just a quick check of the section on "Pharmacology," it was noted that nearly half of the books included were published before 1964. One cannot help but wonder if these are all significant, classic books, or if they were included to fill out the space available.

The inclusion of books with a popular approach or nature tends to diminish any remnant image of a scholarly attempt at compiling a technical work.

The use of the same type face, although admittedly a little larger, for both the subheads within sections and the authors' last names adds to the reader's confusion.

While there is apparently a need for this type of book and the editors have made an initial step, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to recommend this book for general use.

*Staff Review* ■

**Contraception: The Chemical Control of Fertility.** Edited by DANIEL LEDNICER. Marcel Dekker, Inc., 95 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016, 1969. xiv + 269 pp. 15.5 × 24 cm. Price \$13.75.

This is an excellent book for researchers who are entering the field of female antifertility. It contains six chapters which deal with biology and chemistry of steroidal and nonsteroidal agents. Each chapter is authored by men who are well versed in their respective fields.

Chapter One introduces the reader to the reproductive cycle of the human female and discusses the interplay between the hypothalamus, pituitary, and ovary.

Chapters Two and Four emphasize the biology of steroidal and nonsteroidal compounds that are either being used as contraceptive agents or have been evaluated in animals. Chapter Two in particular discusses in detail the mode of action and the rationale for selecting the present steroidal contraceptive agents. Chapter Four, on the other hand, primarily emphasizes the biology of nonsteroidal estrogens and antiestrogens. The chemistry is also divided in two chapters. Chapter Three covers the synthesis and the biological activity of various 19-norsteroids and progesterone-like compounds. Other chemical antifertility agents, referred to as nonsteroidals, are discussed in Chapter Five. The free use of flow diagrams and isolated structures brings to light the various routes and rationale that medicinal chemists have explored over the past decade.

Finally, the big plus for the book is the chapter on Assays and Screens. The author has compiled various methods that have been employed by a number of workers in screening for antifertility agents. The use of tissue slides enhances the appreciation of a novice for these assays.

All in all, the book is well written and the chapters are well coordinated. It does have, however, many typographical errors especially in Chapter Five. A chapter on "absorption, excretion, and metabolism" of existing contraceptive agents, in my opinion would have contributed immensely. Also, some mention of male antifertility would have been in order even though the editors did explain its omission in the Preface. The book can certainly be recommended for advanced graduate students and researchers in the field of contraception.

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**Isolation and Identification of Drugs (in pharmaceuticals, body fluids and post-mortem material).** Edited by E. G. C. CLARKE. The Pharmaceutical Press, 17 Bloomsbury Square, WC-1, London, England. U. S. distributor: Rittenhouse Book Store, 1706 Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, PA 19103, 1969. xxii + 870 pp. 14.8 × 22.6 cm. Price \$39.00.

Clarke has drawn into monograph form drug identification methods, properties, metabolism, and toxicology. Most of this vast amount of information was available previously in assorted compilations but this book is the first large-scale collation of data of greatest interest to toxicologists, biochemists, pharmacists, pathologists, and forensic and pharmaceutical chemists. There is a clear need for this compilation and one can only regret the rapid obsolescence inherent in these active areas of research. All the more for this admirably printed and bound volume. The book was produced by the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain as a companion volume to the *Extra Pharmacopoeia*.

The essence of the work is the Monograph. Most concern commercial drug substances but some pesticides, herbicides, and halucinogens are included. Unfortunately, the editor does not state criteria for selection or a cutoff date so one wonders at the absence of some recent, noted drugs. As most important compounds are listed, there is little loss in scope of coverage when transplanted to this country. Each monograph ideally contains statements or paragraphs on title, pharmacologic category, synonyms, trade names, structure, physical properties, screening tests, extraction, coded chromatographic systems, UV and IR absorption, references to