REVIEWS

Pharmacology of the Endocrine System and Related Drugs: Progesterone, Progestational Drugs and Antifertility Agents, Volume II. Section Editor, M. TAUSK. Pergamon Press, Inc., Maxwell House, Fairview Park, Elmsford, NY 10523, 1972. xiv + 538 pp. 16 × 24 cm. Price $36.00.

This second volume of section 48 of the International Encyclopedia of Pharmacology and Therapeutics is composed of 11 chapters by eight eminent contributors. It has accomplished, very completely, in a rather limited amount of space, what it was supposed to do—namely, provide a thorough review of the synthetic progestational drugs that will serve the purpose of a wide variety of basic and applied scientists.

The first part of the text deals with synthetic progestational agents in humans and animals, highlighting their pharmacology, metabolism, and therapeutic applications. The latter part is confined to the antifertility aspects of estrogens, progestational compounds, combinations of both, and their side effects. In addition, there is a concluding summary chapter that not only covers material in both volumes, but also includes some recent information that has come about during the 5 years this volume was in preparation.

Outstanding features of this book include separate subject and author indexes, as well as complete reference sources for this area of pharmacology. The buyer should be cautioned that, in order to really have at hand all the necessary facts for the subject under discussion, the initial volume must also be purchased. Most of the material presented is done so in as readable a manner as can be accomplished in this kind of undertaking and, for the most part, the clarity is better than most other reviews.

This book will undoubtedly be added to all medical libraries throughout the world, and it should find use among not only pharmacologists and endocrinologists, but also obstetricians, gynecologists, and steroidal research groups interested in the actions, mechanisms, and uses of the myriad of compounds described.

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Pharmaceutical Applications of Thin-Layer and Paper Chromatography. Edited by KAREL MACEK. American Elsevier, 52 Vanderbilt Ave., New York, NY 10017, 1972. xvi + 742 pp. 16 × 24.5 cm. Price $78.50.

Macek and twelve cocontributors approached the enormous literature of TLC and paper chromatography (cumulatively called "flat-bed" as the lines of demarcation have dimmed in recent years) with a single objective: to produce a volume uniquely useful to the pharmaceutical milieu. This objective is a reasonable one and long overdue. They have succeeded through diligent coverage of the chosen field and unyielding exclusion of related information from activities in agriculture, dyes, synthetic organic chemistry, and biochemistry.

Rich discussions of technique and interpretation are given so that this volume is no mere catalog of mobilities and references. Their inclusion of both paper and thin-layer data and exclusion of data not of direct pharmaceutical interest have steered the volume reasonably clear of that great and obvious danger, overlap with existing compilations. Moreover, this freshness of effort is aided by the simple fact that more recent literature is included, that is to say reasonably thorough coverage through 1970 with some 1971 work.

Twenty-one chapters, individually authored, divide the mass of information into realistic compartments with only minor discontinuity or overlap. The heart of the volume resides in 10 chapters covering pharmaceutical compounds by class: synthetic organics, steroids, glycosides, saponins, peptide and protein hormones (which suffers slightly from the exclusion of another "flat-bed" technique, electrophoresis), alkaloids, vitamins, antibiotics, plant extracts, and formulation components. One strength of this volume lies in the inclusion of isolation and sample preparation procedures within the context of the individual chapters. Each chapter is well organized and the literature coverage is excellent throughout.

General techniques, choices of systems, and quantitative aspects of each flat-bed method are reviewed in two chapters which are both critical and informative. There is a good chapter on radioisotopic methods. Two chapters are devoted to the interfacing of flat-bed methods with spectroscopic and other chromatographic methods—precisely the areas of greatest recent and future growth. Other chapters deal with qualitative analysis (with schemes), documentation, and detection reagents. A chapter on applications in drug metabolism is included, but this is disappointing when viewed against the current importance of this area in pharmaceutical research. Two insignificant chapters, on laboratory design and "tasks," could have been woven into the stronger fabric of the introductory chapters.

Three indexes are given, so that the reader may retrieve specific information by compound, author, or subject; all are thorough and readily readable. Literature references for each chapter are given by author rather than number, and these are adequately distinguished within the text. The work appears essentially free of typographical errors.

Consistent with a work intended for utility, it is written and edited in a clear, concise fashion. Tabulations of mobilities, systems, and visualizations are extremely clear and easily followed. The figures and diagrams are well executed. The paper, printing, and binding are first rate which, when amplified by the limited production inherent in this area, result in a remarkably costly volume. Few individuals could add it to their personal shelves. This premium price may indeed detract from the stated objective of a uniquely useful volume by placing it out of the reach of many potential users. It is, however, strongly recommended as a library or institutional acquisition and should be available to groups of working pharmaceutical analysts where it will be a major reference for years to come.

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