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BOOKS

REVIEWS

A Guide to Molecular Pharmacology-Toxicology, Parts I and II. Edited by R. M. FEATHERSTONE. Dekker, 95 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016, 1973. Part I, pp. 1-425; Part II, pp. 427-811. 16 × 24 cm. Price: Part I, \$29.50; Part II, \$27.75.

These two volumes consist of twenty-one chapters concerning a number of areas of what may be defined as molecular pharmacology-toxicology. Certainly, the emphasis in every chapter but one is quite heavily molecular. There is no apparent theme or continuity among the chapters which cover a number of topics including cell membranes, sugar transport, receptor isolation, analgesic and curare receptors, general anesthetics, conformational change, spectroscopic tools, quantum pharmacology, etc. Indeed the editor states that the book is intended as a guide, rather than a comprehensive map, to some areas of molecular pharmacology where the authors are actively working and to demonstrate to the reader how the systems discussed can generate information of general significance about big molecule-little molecule interactions. It would be generally agreed that it is a capital mistake for any scientist to confine his or her attention and reading to too narrow a span and there is a necessary role for essays and reviews that indicate the approaches and problems in near and distant fields.

The volumes in question contain a rather heterogeneous selection of essays with considerable variations in length, depth of treatment, and quality. Some chapters take the broad view and others are narrowly confining. Among the best chapters are those by Miller and Smith which present an admirably clear discussion of intermolecular forces and general anesthesia and by Shirachi, Chan, and Trevor on the isolation of pharmacological receptors both of which are very clear expositions taking care to outline the basic problems and the necessary background. More specialized chapters include that by Casy which is a most interesting review of analgesic structure-activity relationships and by Taylor and Kitz on the curare receptor and acetylcholinesterase, respectively, and by Martin, Rousseau, and Baxter on steroid hormones. Other chapters present fairly cursory surveys of NMR, ESR, ORD, and CD spectra and it is not apparent that they are likely to give much insight into the physical and intellectual power of these approaches. There is a certain amount of unnecessary overlap among the chapters—general anesthetic action is covered twice, curare receptors in three places, etc.

On the whole I think that the book is only partially successful in meeting its objectives. However, it is certainly worthy of general perusal and close reading of some chapters, but it is doubtful that many individuals will feel driven to purchase these volumes, the combination of uneven quality and high price likely proving an effective deterrent.

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Reference Values in Human Chemistry. Edited by N. G. SIEST. S. Karger AG, Medical and Scientific Publishers, Arnol-Bocklin-Strasse 25, CH-4011 Basel, Switzerland. 347 pp. 17 × 24.5 cm. Price \$46.90. (Distributed in United States by Albert J. Phiebig, Inc., P. O. Box 352, White Plains, NY 10602).

This publication contains material presented at the Second International Conference on Automatization and Prospective Biology in October 1972. Information on usual values in clinical biochemistry and reference values in human physiological and pathological biochemistry is presented.

The general theme of two of the seven sessions was a detailed study of analytical, physiological intraindividual and interindividual variations of reference values, followed by a study of variations due to age, sex, tobacco, and climatic factors. Chemical parameters, e.g., urea, glucose, and electrolytes, steroids, and plasmatic enzymes are discussed.

The effects of food intake and standard and particular diets are described in both healthy and hyperlipemic subjects.

An examination of drug interferences both from an analytical point of view as well as from physiological and pharmacological points of view is of particular interest.

Staff Review

Alcohol Intoxication and Withdrawal: Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology, vol. 35. Edited by M. M. GROSS, Plenum, 227 West 17th St., New York, NY 10011, 1973. 422 pp. 17 × 25.5 cm. Price \$24.00.

This volume is based upon the symposium entitled "Experimental Studies of Acute Alcohol Intoxication and Withdrawal," a part of the Proceedings of the 30th International Congress on Alcoholism and Addiction, held in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, in September 1972.

Alcoholism is a worldwide social and medical problem. Experimental research on alcoholic intoxication and withdrawal is presented in this publication, including investigations on the metabolic, psychological, and neurological impact of alcohol and alcoholism. Human and animal research into such areas as mechanisms of alcohol, tolerance and physical dependence, biochemical changes in response to alcohol, and disruption of sleep, memory, and psychological equilibrium caused by alcohol intake and withdrawal is covered.

Staff Review