Antibiotics, Vol. III. Mechanism of Action of Antimicrobial and Antitumor Agents. Edited by JOHN W. CORCORAN and FRED E. HAHN. Springer-Verlag, 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010, 1975. 742 pp. 17 × 25 cm. Price $77.10.

The present volume is the third in the Antibiotics series published by Springer-Verlag. Volumes I and II which appeared in 1967 were edited by Gottlieb and Shaw. They were subtitled Mechanism of Action and Biosynthesis, respectively. Volume III is subtitled Mechanism of Action of Antimicrobial and Antitumor Agents and represents an updating and expansion of the material in Volume I, adding new topics and repeating those in which, in the opinion of the editors, there has been sufficient advance. The book consists of 46 chapters, each a short review of one or of a small group of closely related antibiotics. The chapters are divided into three sections according to the mechanism of action of the compounds.

The reviews, written by original contributors in the fields of the respective antibiotic, are for the most part excellent. For those for whom the volume is presumably intended (the research worker and advanced student), it will provide a welcome and valuable source of material that is otherwise scattered throughout the literature. For physicians and others primarily interested in the clinical use of antibiotics, however, the book will be of less value. Intentionally, no effort is made to distinguish by order or by emphasis those compounds clinically useful as antimicrobials, those clinically useful as antineoplastic agents, and those with no clinical application, and no effort is made to stress this aspect in the reviews themselves. Within the limits sets for it, however, the book can be strongly recommended, although the price, following the recent trend for volumes of this sort, will unfortunately put it out of the reach of many.

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The Fate of Drugs in the Organism, A Bibliography Survey, Vols. 1 and 2. Edited by J. HIRTZ, Societe Francaise des Sciences et Techniques Pharmaceutiques Working Group. Marcel Dekker, Inc., 270 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016, 1974 and 1975. 16 × 23 cm. 579 and 578 pp. Price $59.50 each.

These publications, the first of a new series, are divided into three parts: a sequentially numbered list of collected references, an analytical table of references arranged according to drug name, and an empirical formula table. In the analytical table, the content of each article is briefly analyzed using a series of 17 key words. In addition, the publication year and the total number of references quoted in the article are given.

While these publications do not intend to be exhaustive, they do attempt to locate information from various sources about the absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion of drugs and pull it together for easier use. Three thousand articles are included in each volume.

Staff Review

Neurological Complications of Oral Contraceptives. By EDWIN R. BICKERSTAFF. Oxford University Press, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, 1975. viii + 107 pp. 16.2 × 24 cm. Price $15.00.

This interesting little book was written by the Senior Consultant Neurologist at the Midland Centre for Neurosurgery and Neurology in Birmingham, England. The information contained in it is a blend of the author's own clinical experience and a somewhat modest review of the literature. Bickerstaff does acknowledge that he has not attempted to present an exhaustive review of the world's literature; unhappily, however, a few of the authors chosen to be cited may find their names misspelled. Such typographical errors, along with a few others, *in toto* are not numerous, except if one considers the small size of the book, 19 pages of which consist only of illustrative figures and their legends. These figures, incidentally, most of which are arteriograms, are excellent. However, since the author indicates that he is writing primarily for nonneurologists, much of his intended audience might better appreciate the figures if more of the latter contained arrowed labeling in addition to the legends.

The book is divided into five parts. The first and longest part, entitled Intracranial Vascular Disease, includes sections on the incidence and diagnosis of episodes of cerebral arterial insufficiency in healthy young women, patterns of cerebral arterial involvement, predisposing factors, possible etiology, symptomatology, investigation and clinical management, late prognosis, and intracranial venous occlusion. The remaining and much shorter four parts of the book are entitled Involuntary Movements, Neuro-opthalmological Disorders, Disorders of Cerebral or Cerebrovascular Function, *i.e.,* migraine and epilepsy, and, lastly, Miscellaneous Disorders.

A large section of Part I also is devoted to "the development of thought on the association between cerebrovascular disease and the use of oral contraceptives." The author has attempted to present an unbiased account by citing opinions from both sides of the controversy. Nevertheless, it is rather clear where the author's personal opinions lie. The reader, unfortunately, is not presented with the type of quantitative information needed to form an opinion. The reader is presented, instead, with statements such as "... occlusion of normal cerebral arteries in either stage of the reproductive cycle is, in practical terms, a great rarity, ...," and also with case histories of the author's patients who had been taking oral contraceptives and who had suffered neurological disorders. Cases in which it was indicated that the symptoms disappeared when the preparation was withdrawn, and reappeared when oral contraceptives were again administered, are certainly suggestive of an association. However, although the author stresses that the oral contraceptives should be withdrawn when certain neurological symptoms appear, a number of the case histories indicate recovery with no mention of whether or not the preparation was discontinued.

Furthermore, it would be hoped that in a book with the title "Neurological Complications of Oral Contraceptives," quantitative data might be found, estimating the actual incidence of most of the neurological disorders discussed, in the nonpregnant nonuser, nonpregnant user, pregnant, and puerperal populations. Incidentally, it should be pointed out that the author refers a number of times to low-estrogen preparations. The American reader should be aware, however, that most, if not all, of these comments refer to preparations containing 50 μg of estrogen. Combined preparations containing less than 50 μg of estrogen have appeared on the market much more recently in England than they have in the United States.

Perhaps the greatest value of this book lies in its detailed descriptions, with illustrative case histories, of the symptoms of various neurological disorders, particularly those due to cerebral arterial insufficiency and intracranial venous occlusion, and in its warning that a change in one's pattern of migrainous attack, again illustrated with case histories, could portend the development of a more serious vascular problem. Since an association between the use of oral contraceptives and cerebrovascular deficit certainly has not been disproven, the reader would probably do well to discontinue the use of oral contraceptives in patients exhibiting such symptoms.

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