

BOOK REVIEW

PHARMACOLOGY. By J. H. Gaddum. Fifth Edition. Pp. xvi + 587 (including Index). Oxford University Press, London, 1959. 42s.

It is 6 years since the fourth edition of this popular textbook was published. Although an enormous number of new drugs have been introduced since 1953, the text has increased by only 5 per cent. Textbooks of this kind, as soon as they become too bulky, pass rapidly into the realm of reference books, so Professor Gaddum is to be congratulated on his pruning of the material.

All the important drugs of the British Pharmacopoeia 1958 are described, and now for the first time the official doses have been included. The largest new sections deal with the actions and uses of some radioactive isotopes and with the methods used in the study of the effects of drugs on the brain. At the present time, these aspects of the subject form part of the basic training of pharmacologists and it is certain that their scope will widen in future years. The subject matter has had to be concentrated but, as in previous editions, ready access to it has been secured by an efficient index. The idea of presenting so many tables illustrating the chemical relationship of closely allied substances is excellent for students and teachers alike, and this is particularly useful for the corticoids, the barbiturates, the analgesics, the local anaesthetics, the antihistamines, the phenothiazines, the acridines and the sulphonamides. It is a good plan, too, to include tables of weights and measures and a key to chemical names, for conversion factors and formulae are not always fully appreciated by biological workers.

In the first edition, which appeared in 1940, Professor Gaddum suggested that all workers connected with drugs should know something of the kind of evidence that justifies the clinical trial of new substances. In the fifth edition, it is good to find that so many of the experimental methods used before the introduction of new therapeutic measures have been retained. This also makes the book more enjoyable to read. One mistake in the text occurs on page 236 ("Most" should be "Mast"). As it is a moderately-sized book covering the general principles of pharmacology and surveying the commoner drugs, there is no hesitation in recommending it to all who are interested in medical science.

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