

BOOK REVIEW

THE PHARMACOLOGY AND CLINICAL USE OF DIURETICS. By Carroll A. Handley and John H. Moyer. Pp. viii + 194 (including Index). Blackwell Scientific Publications, Ltd., Oxford, 1959. 48s.

The authors of this book, together with their colleagues have been occupied in the pharmacological and clinical study of diuretics for several years. They emphasise in their preface, that the book, being concerned mainly with their own work, is in no way a review of the literature. For this reason the list of references is short, there being 112, of which 39 refer to the work of the authors themselves. The first of two introductory chapters summarises the methods of renal control of water and electrolyte balance and includes a short consideration of the actions of aldosterone and ACTH. The second describes some of the clinical conditions that benefit from treatment with diuretics, and also contains a discussion of the various factors leading to the formation of oedema, and the methods available for its control.

Emphasis is placed upon clinical rather than animal pharmacology since most of the authors' work appears to have been carried out using hospital patients. The method of evaluating the potency of the diuretics involved a study of patients maintained on controlled diets, in order that exact water and electrolyte balances could be established. Against this background, water and sodium chloride excretions, together with changes in body weight were determined for the various diuretics. Dose-response curves capable of statistical analysis could then be obtained. The form of the dose-response curves differed for the various classes of diuretics, and the significance of these results is discussed. The influence of the route of administration on the potency of each diuretic was investigated and a study was made of the rate of their excretion. After a brief summary of the biochemistry and pharmacology of each class of diuretics there is a detailed account of the authors' results together with a note of the optimum dose schedules employed. The book is concluded by a summary of the treatments used in various clinical conditions and a list of special diets employed by the authors. There is also a short addendum describing the more recent derivatives of chlorothiazide.

With one or two exceptions, the graphs and figures are clear and understandable. The book suffers from rather too many typographical errors, but the presentation and binding is good. This book is neither a text-book, nor is it designed for the research worker; it will, however, serve as an adequate introduction to those who wish to employ diuretics in clinical practice.

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