

PHARMACOPOEIAS AND FORMULARIES

THE EXTRA PHARMACOPOEIA (MARTINDALE) SUPPLEMENT 1961*

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THE Extra Pharmacopoeia Supplement represents a departure from the established practice of publication of new editions of each of the two volumes of the Extra Pharmacopoeia every four to five years. The present book, which appears at a time when the revised version of Volume II would normally be issued, is intended to serve a dual purpose. In addition to bringing up to date the material carried in the latest edition of Volume II (23rd edition, 1955) it also provides new and revised information for the more recent Volume I (24th edition, 1958). This explanation is necessary to understand the scope of the Supplement and the reason why a new Volume II has not been issued. The preface states that this change in publication policy was prompted by the most rapid change in "the composition, general properties, actions and uses, dosage, and toxic effects of the drug and medicinal preparations in current use, and it is this information with which Volume I almost entirely concerned".

The Supplement in itself is deceptively small in physical appearance. Actually, however, it contains over 300 pages which are filled with a vast variety of useful information. Moreover, because of the fact that most of the material has not appeared in previous editions of the Extra Pharmacopoeia, it may well be that this single book presents more new information than any two-volume set of the previous editions. Those using "Martindale", however, must now exercise normal caution in checking the Supplement first before referring to Volumes I and II, in order to assure that the information they seek is the latest provided. The slight inconvenience this causes is more than compensated by the economies in size and cost which have been afforded.

The Supplement is divided into seven main sections: (1) analytical addenda, (2) bacteriological and clinical notes, (3) sterilisation, (4) disinfectants, (5) blood transfusion, (6) formulae of proprietary medicines, and (7) new drugs and proprietary medicines. In addition, a list of abbreviations, a directory of manufacturers, and a well-prepared index are also provided.

The analytical addenda section gives informative summaries of scientific literature reports which deal with substances added to the latest editions of the British Pharmacopoeia, the British Pharmaceutical Codex, and the British Veterinary Codex. Also included are revisions of the subsections on barbiturates and sulphonamides, along with a number of abstracts of papers on miscellaneous analytical procedures of pharmaceutical interest. The bacteriological and clinical notes section brings up to date the corresponding discussions which appeared in Volume II. The sections on

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disinfectants and on sterilisation, which are treated separately, likewise are intended to revise the corresponding chapters in Volume II to a significant extent. In this connection the recent scientific literature has been thoroughly reviewed. As a consequence, those responsible for compiling these sections have wisely chosen to cite liberally the original references, which further enhances the value of the summaries.

The new chapter on Blood Transfusion represents a very comprehensive review on the subject which was not treated in either Volume I or Volume II. This extensive chapter describes the clinical uses of blood transfusion; the various blood-group systems; the determination of blood groups; compatibility tests; blood collection, preservation, storage, and handling; transfusion practice; and transfusion reactions. Unquestionably then, this represents a near-classic work on the subject. Unfortunately, however, this chapter is not documented with original reference citations as in the case of the sections which have been discussed above. Such documentation is not perhaps as important here, and furthermore, the omission is somewhat offset by the list of general references given at the end of the chapter.

The last two sections of the Supplement then provide, respectively, a complete revision of the list of proprietary medicine formulae given previously in Volume II, and supplemental information on new drugs and proprietary medicines to that described in Volume I. The proximity of these two separate tabulations causes this reviewer to speculate that a single integrated list might well be considered for future editions. In such a tabulation suitable symbols, prominently placed to precede each item, might indicate whether that item is (1) a "counter" proprietary, (2) an "ethical" proprietary, or (3) a substance subject to restrictions.

A most remarkable and striking feature of the Supplement is the inclusion of very recent information. *Addenda* have been inserted toward the end of the book, and through this mechanism information on products introduced as recently as April, 1961, has been included. When the publication date of July 7, 1961, for the Supplement is considered, those familiar with the problems of publication will recognise this as quite a noteworthy feat.

To those possessing the latest two volumes in the series, the Supplement represents an indispensable adjunct. For others, it will be a useful reference tool, particularly in the wealth of new information and tabulations which it provides. Those responsible for its compilation are to be congratulated once again on the splendid service they have rendered to the pharmaceutical and medicinal communities.