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Letter to the Editor

The metabolic chiral inversion of 2-arylpropionic acids—A novel route with pharmacological consequences—a correction

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In our recent review (Hutt & Caldwell 1983) on the metabolic chiral inversion of the 2-aryl propionic acids, Fig. 1 presented flying wedge diagrams to depict the three-dimensional structures of the enantiomers, assigned according to Shen (1979). Close examination of the Figure, in the light of model building, reveals that the absolute configurational designation of these structures is incorrect and should be reversed, i.e. the enantiomer labelled by us as *R*(−) is in fact *S*(+) and vice versa. We apologise for this error, and would also point out that the diagram of Shen (1979) upon which our assignments were based is similarly incorrect.

Since the appearance of our review, two additional examples of the metabolic chiral inversion of 2-arylpropionates have been brought to our attention. Both 2-[3-(2-chlorophenoxyphenyl)]-propionic acid (Tamegai et al 1979) and loxoprofen (Nagashima et al 1984) have been shown to undergo this reaction in the rat. In addition, it is of interest to note that indoprofen apparently does not exhibit metabolic inversion in man, since the plasma level-time curves of the *S*-(+)-enantiomer were identified when the enantiomer was given as such or as the racemic mixture (Tamassia et al 1984). Two general methods for the HPLC resolution of enantiomers of the 2-arylpropionates have been reported, one (Maitre et al 1984) involving the formation of diastereoisomeric amides with a chiral amine, and the other (Wainer & Doyle 1984) using a chiral stationary phase.

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We wish to thank Drs K. Brown, R. W. Daisley and P. Dostert for helpful discussions regarding the nomenclature of the 2-arylpropionate enantiomers.

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