

Book Review

Drug Permeation Enhancement. Theory and Applications.
(Drugs and the Pharmaceutical Sciences Series, Volume 62)
Edited by Dean S. Hsieh
Published 1994 Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York
448 pages
ISBN 0 8247 9015 4 \$150.00

Dr Hsieh has compiled a book that is split into five sections of specialization, these being: a general introduction to permeation enhancement; chemical means of permeation enhancement through the skin; physical means of permeation enhancement through the skin; permeation enhancement via the nasal route; and finally permeation enhancement via the ocular route. The later two sections make up about only 20% of the book, the remainder being devoted almost entirely to the enhancement of permeation through skin. Thus, the title is a little misleading in its generality, and on perusing the contents list I was left feeling thankful that my interests lie predominantly in the field of percutaneous penetration.

The opening chapter of the book is an introduction to permeation enhancement and, as such, is fine if a little basic—posing questions such as ‘what is a penetration enhancer?’ One would hope that the reader knew the answer to this before opening the book. This aside, the first chapter serves as a fairly good introduction to the graduate student or novice in the field (I assume this was the intention). The second chapter strikes me as being a little political in nature as the author is from the FDA, this presumably putting that organization’s unofficial seal of approval on the book (the fact that the chapter is only five pages long appears to vindicate this point). Chapter 3 is a fairly tight work on transepithelium transport enhancement. Chapters 4 to 10 discuss various aspects of skin permeation enhancement by chemical means, and do address several inter-

esting questions such as enhancement reversibility and the compatibility and synergy of permeation enhancers with other formulation ingredients. A further five chapters then set out to discuss the physical means by which permeation enhancement can be achieved. These chapters concentrate primarily on iontophoresis with one chapter on phonophoresis.

However, there is a glaring omission in the book. There appears to be no chapter on the use of supersaturation as a method of enhancement. The concepts behind this are a little tricky for some people and a chapter dealing with them is, in my mind at least, an essential inclusion in a book about enhancement. If ever there was a case of ‘more for less’ then supersaturation and its application to permeation enhancement is it!

This volume is number 62 in a series of books that contains (at number 59) a book entitled *Pharmaceutical Skin Penetration Enhancement* edited by Walters and Hadgraft. If Dr Hsieh’s book has a problem then this is likely to be it. As I have pointed out, Dr Hsieh’s book is predominantly based on permeation enhancement through the skin and therefore it is difficult not to compare his volume with that of Walters and Hadgraft published a few months earlier. It must be said that volume 59 is a better read than volume 62 and I would certainly buy the earlier work in preference. The problem is that the vast majority of Dr Hsieh’s book is based on the skin and the inclusion of ocular and nasal penetration enhancement leaves no room for certain topics (such as supersaturation) that would make it a more rounded work. I guess the reverse is true of the nasal and ocular sections in that they are not fully addressed and appear to be there to fulfil the apparent generality of the book’s title. In this respect I feel that the book is trying to sit in two camps and is really sitting on the fence. Buy this book to complete your library, but not to start it.

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Book Review

Hypertension: Pathophysiology, Diagnosis, and Management. Second Edition
Edited by John H. Laragh and Barry M. Brenner
Published 1994 Raven Press, New York
2-volume set, 3344 pages
ISBN 0 7817 0157 0 \$397.00

I will not try to persuade anyone that I have read the whole of this enormous book. Apart from the editors, it is very likely that nobody has, or can. Since the first edition, five years ago, it has grown by fully a third and now comprises 189 chapters in 10 sections. In its scope the book is true to its title and includes reviews of almost all conceivable aspects of hypertension, from epidemiology to molecular genetics, as well as consideration of the kidney and the nervous system in hypertension, the renin-angiotensin system, secondary causes of hypertension and much else. As one might expect, the great majority of the contributors are from the USA but there are also many eminent experts from Western Europe and Australasia. The quality of production is, as always with this publisher, very high, and the indexing is exemplary. This then is a compendium of most current knowledge in hypertension, or at least as it was about 18 months to 2 years ago. Nevertheless, it is difficult to recommend wholeheartedly, and the principal reason is editing or rather lack of it. Although the major sections are entirely logical, the division of chapters within them is less satisfactory. As a minor example, there are two excellent chapters on insulin resistance from Fererannini and Ames, but one would have been sufficient. More strikingly, the renin-angiotensin system is handled in a very diffuse way: a more concise treatment would have been possible and preferable from the reader’s point of view. To an extent this is also true of neural regulation of blood pressure and of other topics. One’s overall impression is that the

contributors were given rather approximate briefs for their chapter, leading to inevitable redundancy. It is also curious, though not very important, that the reference style is not uniform throughout the book. In some chapters the full Vancouver system is used, while in others the titles of papers are omitted. By contrast, Swales’ *Textbook of Hypertension*, which appeared last year, is more tightly organized and edited, and is less than half the length without any very major loss of information. It is also surprising that no single chapter gives guidelines for the clinician confronted with the ‘ordinary’ patient with essential hypertension, with or without concurrent diseases, though there is a very good chapter on the management of hypertensive emergencies. The nearest approach is the chapter by Ménard and colleagues advocating an individualized approach to management: surely yesterday’s battle?

Nonetheless, it is likely that most medical libraries and all academic units interested in hypertension will want this book as a reference source. This leads to a final comment, painful to those like myself that are very fond of books. Can this format survive for a publication like this at the end of the 1990s? For one thing, despite the efforts of the editors—and anyone who has edited a much less ambitious book can sympathize with the torment involved—this book is already dated. In some chapters the latest references are from 1993, in other from the previous year. For another, the whole is physically unwieldy. It is difficult to imagine that future editions will not be at least published in parallel, or even exclusively, as CD-ROM or in another interactive format, suitable for annual or even more frequent updating. It will also of course allow much easier cross referencing and the inclusion of much more visual material. Books like this are probably on the road to extinction.

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