

Roger Walker and Clive Edwards, *Clinical Pharmacy and Therapeutics (3rd Edition)*

London: Churchill Livingstone, 2003. 937 pages, paperback £ 39.99
ISBN 0-443-07137-3

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Over the last 20 years, clinical pharmacy has become established as a key and valued discipline in all sectors of pharmacy practice. The document "A Vision for Pharmacy in the New NHS", recently published by the Department of Health, identifies a number of key areas for pharmaceutical development in primary and secondary care. These include medicines management, the prevention, detection and recording of adverse drug events and medication errors, public health, health promotion, prescribing of medicines and monitoring clinical outcomes. These patient-centred initiatives will continue to place increasing demands on the clinical skills and therapeutic knowledge of the practising pharmacist.

For most pharmacists, at least those educated outside the US and Australia, the acquisition of an in-depth, relevant clinical training is not a trivial matter. Most pharmacy undergraduate programmes in the UK continue to be science-dominated and pharmacy students receive only a fraction of their training in the clinical setting. Excellent pre-registration and postgraduate training schemes partly compensate for these deficiencies, but there remains a compelling need for an accessible and comprehensive source of clinical knowledge to underpin professional development in clinical pharmacy. In this context, the publication of the third edition of *Clinical Pharmacy and Therapeutics* is both relevant and timely.

The presentation and appearance of this new edition has improved significantly, with the use of a larger page format and the careful use of red text and red shading to lend emphasis where appropriate. As with the previous edition, the contents are organised into 4 sections. Section 1, which carries the non-descript title of "General", comprises 6 chapters on various topics ranging from pharmacokinetics to pharmacoeconomics. This section introduces the reader to some of the clinically-related concepts they will encounter in the therapeutic chapters later in the book, although the rationale for the selection of these 6 topics in preference to other, equally important material, is not clear. For example, chapters on critical appraisal, clinical trials, ethics, pharmacogenomics, medication errors and drug

administration/venous access devices could be considered for future editions, possibly as a separate or companion volume.

Section 2 contains three brief but useful chapters on life stages, which consider clinical and pharmaceutical issues specific to neonates, paediatrics and geriatrics.

The real substance of the book is found in Section 3, which deals with Therapeutics. This section is organised into 15 therapeutic areas containing a total of 46 chapters on different disease states. Each chapter covers the disease epidemiology and pathophysiology, the clinical features of the disease, diagnostic investigations and the therapeutic interventions. The therapeutic areas are conveniently arranged in the same running order used by the BNF.

The final section (Appendices), includes medical abbreviations, a glossary of clinical terms and a list of Recommended International Non-proprietary Names of medicines.

The revised chapters in the Therapeutics section have benefited from skilful editorial work, which has maintained a feel of consistency across chapters of disparate content. Inevitably, some disease states are covered in greater detail than others. In some cases, this is the result of grouping multiple disease conditions under a single chapter (eg. solid tumours), albeit for perfectly pragmatic reasons.

Particular highlights of the third edition include the addition of key references throughout the text and also the inclusion of coloured photographs in the Eczema and Psoriasis chapter, which will be invaluable to pharmacists undertaking "responding to symptoms" roles. The provision of a "Useful Website" section at the end of the HIV Infection chapter is an excellent innovation and should be extended to other chapters. As the editors correctly point out, information in a book such as this can date rapidly. Despite this caveat, the new edition reflects accurately contemporary standards of treatment and reference is made to the relevant NSF or NICE guidelines, where appropriate.

In summary, this excellent book has relatively few shortcomings and is a credit to the efforts of the editors and their highly-respected contributors. It provides comprehensive and authoritative information for clinicians and healthcare professionals who wish to develop their knowledge of basic pharmacology into pharmacotherapy and clinical practice. In my own experience, the new edition of Walker and Edwards has been enthusiastically received by pharmacy students, junior medical staff, clinicians entering new specialities, and by individuals preparing for accreditation as supplementary prescribers. As a resource for those wishing to develop a comprehensive knowledge-base in clinical pharmacy, this book represents excellent value for money.