

Lindsay M Taylor, *Pharmacy Preregistration Handbook 2nd Edition*

London: Pharmaceutical Press, 2002. 230 pages
paperback. £24.95
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The 'fallow year' in graduate output that followed the introduction of a four year pharmacy degree throughout the United Kingdom led to a significant revision in the preregistration training scheme developed by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB). The new training scheme is focused on collection of evidence that trainees met defined 'performance standards' in contrast to the old system which measured performance against a range of competencies. The new scheme is the preferred form of preregistration training and will be used for all trainees throughout Great Britain from 2004/5 onwards.

The nature of preregistration training has changed in the last two years in response to the new scheme, particularly in regard to the need to organise a cross sector placement to give, for example, a community based trainee experience in hospital practice, or vice versa. In addition, RPSGB expect that the training and experience offered to a trainee is individualised to avoid repetition of aspects of practice that the trainee has already seen and to offer more coverage that fills gaps in their experience. As a consequence of the requirements of the new scheme, in particular the need to develop an individualised programme for each trainee, the skills required of preregistration tutors have also increased.

Change is often an unwelcome challenge and, with many tutors involved in preregistration training being new to the role, many are uncertain what the new scheme requires of them. Preregistration trainees are perhaps cynical about entering another 'new' scheme, having been students in the first cohorts studying the fourth year of the MPharm degree courses. A book offering practical support targeted at preregistration training such as this would, therefore, be a welcome resource to meet the needs of tutors and trainees alike.

The *Pharmacy Preregistration Handbook 2nd Edition* contains much useful information that will be valued by tutors and preregistration trainees, but, that being said, I was a little disappointed by the book as a whole. The needs of tutors and trainees are quite different, and as I read the early sections covering administrative problems associated with preregistration training I was often left asking who particular sections were being written for. This problem was compounded by the attempts to draw parallels between the new training scheme and the previous competency based training programme. The first edition of this book would presumably have been aimed at the previous training scheme and tutors who are still working with the competency based programme would have a copy, so why discuss it in the second edition? This may seem a pedantic point, but from the perspective of a trainee reading the book, what relevance does this comparison have?

The preregistration exam developed by the RPSGB is an issue that greatly exercises the minds of trainees as they pass through their training year. Adding a number of calculation based questions which trainees must answer without a calculator is a specific aspect of the exam that causes concern, especially as there is a secondary pass mark for these questions. The book gives four of its six sections over to various aspects of the exam, particularly with regard to the need to perform calculations. The lack of mental arithmetic skills in undergraduates in general (not specifically pharmacy students) is a matter of concern, and so the coverage of skills to develop a 'sense of number' provided by the book is useful. The worked example answers to sample calculation questions take the reinforcement of numeracy skills further, but other books exist on pharmaceutical calculations which provide more detail on the subject.

Guidance given on exam technique for the registration exam is sound, emphasizing the need for trainees to read questions accurately to identify potential traps in order to work out accurate answers. The section on non-calculation based questions is less well written and uses an audit of past questions set in sample exam papers as the basis for refining exam technique. Different styles of question are discussed, using examples, and points raised by a particular format are coded in a manner which is very confusing. At times, parts of this section of the book read like an academic justification for the question formats being used, which would be of little practical use to either trainees or tutors. The exam continues to cause

problems for trainees, as, in my experience, it is quite common for trainees sitting the registration exam to claim that the questions used in the final paper are quite different from those used in sample papers. It further appears that the banks of questions used for the registration exam and sample papers produced by the RPSGB are very small, so if a book such as this could provide guidance on exam technique using original questions this would become a more valuable resource to support tutors and trainees.

The main omission from this book was the lack of any guidance on how a training year should be structured. The book, together with materials produced by the RPSGB,

cover the training syllabus in great detail, but none provide the help that tutors increasingly need to develop a genuinely individualised experience for their trainee.

In summary, this is a useful book covering a broad and difficult area of practice. It is not yet fully refined, and whilst offering a lot of information that will be of practical value to trainees and tutors, it can be made even better. A third edition focused solely on the new training scheme, with sections clearly aimed at tutors or trainees, and with ideas on tailoring training to meet individual needs would be a resource that would be essential reading for all involved in preregistration training.

Miklós Gábor, *Mouse Ear Inflammation Models and their Pharmacological Applications*

Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2000. 336 pages
hardback. \$68.00
ISBN 963-05-7704-6

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This book claims to be the first monograph to give a general survey of the mouse ear inflammation model and the response to a variety of pharmacological and investigative agents and natural products. There have been a number of reviews of this model (e.g. J.M. Young & L.M. De Young (1989) Cutaneous models of inflammation for the evaluation of topical and systemic pharmacological agents. In: J.Y. Chang & A.J. Lewis (Eds) *Pharmacological Methods in the Control of Inflammation*, New York: Alan R Liss), but none is as comprehensive as this book.

The mouse ear inflammation (MEI) model involves inducing inflammation by the topical application of an irritant or inflammagen usually in mild organic solvents (acetone, dimethyl sulfoxide). This model attracted much interest in the 1980s when a number of pharmaceutical companies started to use the arachidonic acid, phorbol ester (TPA) or other irritants as inflammagens to screen for cyclo-oxygenase (COX) and/or lipoxygenase (LOX) inhibitors. At meetings during that period of the Inflammation Research Association (IRA, a largely company-based research society) in the USA there was much debate whether this model could enable screening of mixed COX-LOX inhibitors from simple COX inhibitors. Variations of the concentrations of the inflammagens enabled "tweaking" of the responses in this model and one could get the response desired according to variations in the experimental conditions. After a while the model fell out of favour as a screening method because it was not clear what pharmacological agents could be selectively detected in this model. Part of the problem is that the range of LOX or

COX-LOX inhibitors, leukotriene antagonists and COX inhibitors available during the 1980s were not very specific. Thus, it would be useful to apply some of the newer agents available now for screening in this model with responses to various inflammagens in order to re-visit the proposition that the model might enable quantitative discrimination of drugs with varying pharmacological specificity.

This book is a mine of information on the effects of a whole range of pharmacological agents and natural products of varying specificity and chemical agents. Among these are conventional and novel steroidal and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory and analgesic agents, some experimental anti-inflammatory agents, antibiotics, antifungal agents, leukotriene and PAF antagonists, histamine antagonists and histamine synthesis inhibitors, various peptide agonists and antagonists (e.g. CGRP, carnitine, enkephalins), plant extracts and their component flavanoids, phenolics and other chemicals, marine products and some toxins. The descriptions of their actions are comprehensive and accurate. There are details of the physiopathologic responses to the inflammagens and some details of the histology, although some photomicrographs would have been useful. Various procedures for measuring the oedematous or other components of the inflammatory response (e.g. myeloperoxidase activity as a measure of cellular infiltration, isotopic procedures) are also mentioned. The only disadvantage is that the author has not always given a very critical evaluation or interpretation of the results obtained under different experimental conditions. None-the-less, the book is an immensely useful reference source and is well written. It is a pity that titles for the references are not given since this helps with locating them from library sources.

The book can be strongly recommended for pharmacologists, pharmacists and toxicologists in academe and industry alike. The book also has a section on the effects of agents that cause dermatitis and hyperproliferative skin diseases and thus would also be of interest to dermatologists and pathologists. The author should be complimented in bringing together a very comprehensive collection of information from a variety of literature sources into a very useful and comprehensible text.