

Book Reviews*

Antidepressants, Antipsychotics, Anxiolytics, from Chemistry and Pharmacology to Clinical Application, Volumes 1 and 2. Edited by H. Buschmann, J. L. Díaz, J. Holenz, A. Párraga, A. Torrens, J. M. Vela. Wiley-VCH Verlag, GmbH and Co. KGaA: Weinheim. 2007. Vol. 1, 616 pp; Vol. 2, 580 pp plus indices, 1260 pp total. Hardcover £215.00/301.00. 978-527-31058-6.

Antidepressants, Antipsychotics and Anxiolytics is a body of information contained in two volumes, with volume 1 covering the antidepressants and antipsychotics and volume 2 covering anxiolytics (and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders). The separate major subject areas are presented in a consistent and methodical fashion starting with a good introduction to the basic aspects; next are the clinical approaches, pharmacology, and experimental research sections; and finally chemistry (although the attention deficit disorders section does not have a discussion of experimental research). Each of the subsections is further subclassified, making it simple for the reader to locate subject matter of specific interest. In line with a clear and well-structured format, there is a comprehensive index, although in some aspects it may be a little frustrating to use. For example, ADHD is an index entry and has 75 entries; thus, finding the specific portion to read will be a chore. Notwithstanding this, there is an excellent glossary of terms to assist. All chemicals described in the chemistry sections are listed with "synthesis" as a sublisting to direct the reader promptly to the route.

As a development chemist I found the introduction and basic aspects sections very interesting, for instance with the first section in volume 1 providing an excellent overview of the history of the depressive disorder, its description, and hypotheses of its treatment. The content is set at a level suitable for the nonexpert and provides a very good and interesting background to the subject. Later major subject areas are similarly treated, giving a very informative and interesting introduction and outline of basic aspects in each case. Again, as a development chemist, I found the later sections about clinical approaches, pharmacology, and experimental research interesting, albeit more challenging, owing to my very basic level of biological understanding.

Having been treated to excellent introductory sections, which were clearly laid out and subdivided, and from a development chemist's perspective, I was a little disappointed with the chemistry sections. Taking the antidepressants section again as an example, it was subclassified, making it simple for the reader to locate subject matter of specific interest. The groupings are tri- and tetracyclic antidepressants, serotonergic agents, noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors, monoamine oxidase inhibitors, and then miscellaneous agents, drug compounds launched in only one country, and finally new opportunities for marketed drugs and the conclusion.

Each subclassification was treated in a consistent manner (a theme throughout the volumes which made it very easy to find information in the texts), but I felt that the synthesis information appeared to be based on early chemistry and perhaps not reflective of the true manufacturing processes currently employed. In some cases (for example, Sertraline, page 210), once having given what appeared to be an early route, the book mentions later chemistry and provides references, which are much more stimulating and interesting for the development chemist. Later drugs to have reached the market tend to have more recent chemistry discussed, although it remains limited. This aside, the commentary in the chemistry sections on the clinical use, pharmacokinetics, and metabolism was interesting and informative.

A stated hope from Laboratorios Esteve in the Preface was that the book would be a useful reference and assist in spreading knowledge about psychopharmacology and, as a result, enhance the treatments available. In this respect I felt the book met its aim, but a development chemist would have found it more interesting and informative to have a little more commentary on the manufacturing processes. Overall the two volumes provide a good reference source for the therapeutic approaches and active pharmaceutical ingredients currently employed for a range of psychiatric disorders. They are more likely to be of interest to discovery chemists than development chemists.

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