Book Reviews


In this small booklet the lectures of 7 pharmacologists, clinicians, sociologists and psychotherapists, given at the 7th Meeting of the Medical-Scientific Society of Eastern Germany for the Study of Topical Life Conditions, held in Berlin in March 1968, have been collected. This meeting was devoted to the themes ‘habituation, abuse and addiction’, especially the abuse of drugs. These lectures deal with basic neuropharmacological, clinical and experimental problems, the relevance of biogenic amines to the central action of morphine, psychotherapy on addicts, social problems of the use of analgetics and finally with modern methods of drug tracing on addicts. The same problems exist in East and West! O. R. Klimmer, Bonn


Of the various ‘handbooks of poisoning’ in English language this sixth edition of the well known and popular book, written by R. H. Dreisbach, Professor of Pharmacology, is like the former editions really handy. The revised and enlarged edition provides a concise summary of the diagnosis and treatment (first aid and medical therapy) of the more important poisons of the American workaday in text and in tabular form. The clarity and lucidity of its text evade any simplification and make it, together with a large index and the recommendations for modern therapy, a very valuable instrument for medical practice; moreover, the illustrations may be helpful to the less experienced physician. O. R. Klimmer, Bonn


By far the greater part of this very concise and well organized book is on depression, only a small appendix refers to lithium. A wealth of information on definition, classification, diagnosis, and pharmacotherapy of depression is offered in admirable clarity. Much weight has been laid on the selection of the appropriate medication and on side effects. There are even four important pages with helpful instructions to patients on depression and antidepressant drugs (‘So you have a depression’). This small book can be considered a masterpiece written by a very experienced psychiatrist. I detected only one very depressing mistake just in the motto of the book, namely in the latin version of Kipling’s famous limerick ‘There was a young lady of Biga’; ‘Puella nigrrsis’ instead of ‘Puella rigensis’. G. Zeller, Lübeck
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This book contains 21 articles of unequal quality, which cover a very wide field from biochemical pharmacology of psychotropic drugs to gastrointestinal and cardiovascular diseases, normal and abnormal behaviour, peptic ulcer, anorexia nervosa, and excretion of electrolytes. Obviously, only intense future work can improve the bases mentioned in the subtitle. Many contributions, most of them written by clinicians, are not satisfying for they are either abundant in words but poor in facts, figures, and references or have their figures not worked up and presented in accordance with present scientific standards. Admittedly, clinical observers have to cope with many special difficulties which, however, should not prevent a possible application of statistics. A striking feature perhaps originating from some compensatory activity are many drawn or printed ‘schematic representations’ or ‘models’ of interconnected functions, influences, centres, and psychical qualities. I find the title of this book too promising, but the subject index very good.

G. Zetler, Lübeck


This book contains a series of 23 papers which were presented on a symposium during a joint meeting of the British and Italian Pharmacological Societies in Florence in 1968. The contributions present new experimental results on the occurrence and release and on the actions mainly of prostaglandins, but as well of kinins (such as bradykinin, kallidin, edeolisin and others) and of amines; a special section deals with caerulein. Emphasis was laid particularly on relations and interactions between these three types of naturally in tissues occurring agents. Part of these substances have been discovered only recently. On account of this fact and on account of the biological importance of the agents this book will be of interest not only to pharmacologists but also to members of other medical disciplines including clinicians. K. Karzel, Bonn


The enzyme β-glucuronidase plays an important part in the biotransformation of drugs and other exogenous agents as well as of metabolites of endogenous origin. A review on the various aspects of β-glucuronidase as it is presented in this monograph will therefore be welcome to many practitioners, clinicians and research workers. The author describes on account of the literature and own investigations the properties, functions, distribution in the organism and estimation of β-glucuronidase; further sections deal with the behaviour of /i-glucuronidase in various disorders and with influences of hormones, X-rays and drugs on the enzyme. A list of more than 300 references facilitates a further penetration into the matter. K. Karzel, Bonn