Book Reviews

W.A. Ritschel (ed.) Clinical Pharmacokinetics
Proceedings of an International Symposium at
Salzgitter-Ringelheim
Gustav Fischer, Stuttgart 1977
VIII+21 lpp.; DM48.-
ISBN 3-437-10481-0

The proceedings of this meeting, sponsored by the pharmaceutical company Schaper & Brümmer, are a collection of lectures that are fairly heterogeneous both concerning the subjects treated and their scientific levels. There are a number of contributions of general interest that seem suited for publication in form of such a book, for instance those by the editor, W.A. Ritschel. He describes a training program in biopharmaceutics and pharmacokinetics, which has been established for graduates in pharmacy at the University of Cincinnati. In another article, he presents a procedure for calculating dosage regimens in clinical therapy; this description is supplemented by a table comprising pharmacokinetic parameters of a number of common drugs. Of a similar character is a presentation by E. van der Kleijn on the design of a department of clinical pharmacy in Nijmegern. In a short contribution, the Nestor of pharmacokinetics, F.H. Dost, suggests the introduction of new terms based on drug quantities in various compartments, and his former coworker, E. Gladtke, explains difficulties met in pharmacokinetic investigations in children. K. Brune and P. Bätti describe a slide rule that is intended to serve as an aid in courses on pharmacokinetics for medical students. Further valuable lectures concern the effect of protein binding on antibiotic activity, the influence of food on drug release and the kinetics of orally administered vitamins.

A long article by P. Kourounakis on syntoxic and catatotoxic effects of steroids and other hormones, though interesting in itself, is not pertinent to the main topic since it is based solely on animal experiments. The same drawback applies to a number of other contributions. The rest of the articles deals with special investigations that seem to have been available for presentation by chance or with general aspects that were dealt with in such a broad manner that a more experienced reader will not draw much profit from them.

Since the majority of the special material is probably also published elsewhere, it remains questionable whether the production of this book, without critical selection of the contributions, is to be welcomed.

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E. Costa and M. Trabucchi (eds.) The Endorphins
Advances in Biochemical Psychopharmacology,
vol. 18
Raven Press, New York 1978
XVIII 1+ 379 lpp.; US $36.40
Only 3 years ago, the first pair of endogenous opioid peptides, leucin- and methionin-encephalin, has been isolated. Since then, the research activity in this new field has literally exploded and a great number of publications dealing with numerous facets of the action of endorphins in the CNS is continuing to appear. This book contains the proceedings of a symposium on Endorphins, which was held in Brescia in August 1977. The book serves two objectives: first, it summarizes the available data on various aspects of the endorphin research, and second, it makes evident the many bleak areas of our understanding of the functional role of endorphins, which are still open for further investigations. Chapters span a wide range of topics: the localization of endorphins and encephalins and their respective receptors in the CNS, interactions of endogenous opioids with other neuronal networks, electrophysiological and behavioral effects, relationship of endorphins to neuroendocrinological processes of the hypothalamus and the pituitary. Other chapters deal with the significance of endorphins in endogenous antinociception, the indications for an involvement of those structures in psychiatric disorders and acupuncture analgesia. Preliminary data are presented on the existence of endogenous opiate-like compounds which are not peptides. Neuroscientists and other interested scientists who are not involved in this particular research area, will find a comprehensive, well-seasoned book which is easy to read and which gives a valuable survey of this new field of psychopharmacology, which is still expanding.

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