

BOOK REVIEW

POLYMERIC SITE-SPECIFIC PHARMACOTHERAPY

Edited by A.J. Domb

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This multi-author book covers one of the most important areas of current research in pharmaceutical formulation. Pharmaceutical Scientists are in general very well aware of the great potential advantage of site specific drug delivery.

The editor informs readers in the Preface:

"This book concentrates on the recent developments in site-specific drug therapy using mainly absorbable polymers and provides a comprehensive review of the subject. The fundamental concepts are discussed and the technologies available for regional drug therapy are demonstrated by applications and uses of polymeric drug implants for direct treatment of a range of regional diseases".

This is a laudable objective and in many ways the book is successful in reaching its objectives. However, there are some limitations to the book.

The book's seventeen chapters have been written by contributors who are from: Israel, (4), the US (24) the UK (4) and Japan (1). Some authors such as S.S. Davis, L. Illum and R. Langer are very well known in this field, others are less well known. When one recalls all the fine work in this field, which has been conducted in the continental part of the EU and indeed in others parts of the world it is not surprising that some parts of the book at least are parochial rather than global (? comprehensive). This is especially noticeable with chapter sixteen titled:

Regulation of Polymeric Implants, Site-specific Drug Delivery.

This chapter is Rockville-centric in the extreme. The uninitiated could easily be forgiven if after reading this chapter they believed that FDA was the only regulatory body for drugs/devices in the world or that the US was the only market of any real pharmaceutical importance. In fact, of course, neither of these conclusions is correct. The EU by many estimates is now number one, both in pharmaceutical production and use and Japan's output is growing so rapidly as to suggest that it may well move into second place in the world within five to ten years. What a pity, therefore, that this chapter appears to give little if any reference

to regulation in the EU, Japan or other areas of the world outside the US. Surely, at the very least, some reference to international harmonization could have been made.

Obviously, as is always the case with multi-author books there is some unevenness of approach and depth. Quite frankly, this review felt that the introduction to differential equations given on the last two paragraphs of page 71 is so simplistic as to be of little value to readers. Those - surely a majority - who have studied calculus will find it redundant. Any reader who has not studied calculus previously is unlikely to gain any significant understanding of calculus from these two short paragraphs. However, most of the text in the book is relevant although some may feel that there are certain areas of basic theory which could with advantage have been omitted.

The book is well illustrated and although I would have preferred a rather more comprehensive subject index it is probably adequate for most purposes. To what extent can this book legitimately claim to cover recent developments? The answer is probably quite well. Most chapters list between 100 and 200 references and in some cases there are references as late as 1993 although in others the latest appears to be 90 or 91. Bearing in mind the difficulties which editors often experience in obtaining promised chapters from contributors this record is not unreasonable.

All in all this book is likely to be a most useful addition to libraries in Universities, pharmaceutical companies or other organizations in which there is any interest in polymeric drug delivery systems.

C.T. Rhodes, Ph.D.
Professor of Applied Pharmaceutical Sciences
Editor of Drug Development Industrial Pharmacy