

Book Review

Drugs of Abuse, 2nd edition; Simon Wells. 399 pp.; Softback. ISBN: 0-85369-582-2; Pharmaceutical Press, London, 2005.

Drug abuse is a global problem that affects many parts of society and impacts both public health and the economy. The text, *Drugs of Abuse*, discusses this problem and provides an indepth review of commonly abused and misused drugs. The second edition has been extensively revised and updated. The book begins with an introduction to the subject and presents data demonstrating the global relevance of the problem of drug abuse. The author does not limit his discussion to illicit drugs, but also presents data on the use and abuse of legal drugs, including alcohol and tobacco. Basic concepts, including abuse, dependence, and tolerance, are defined. Issues related to legalization are also discussed. The second chapter presents the risks associated with the act of injecting drugs since many drugs of abuse are injected into the body.

Subsequent chapters discuss specific drugs and drug classes, including opioids, cannabis, cocaine, amphetamine and related compounds, LSD, gamma hydroxybutyrate, and phencyclidine. Each chapter provides a brief history of the compound, prevalence of use, effects sought, modes of administration, pharmacology, pharmacokinetics, adverse effects, dependence, and withdrawal. Interactions with medications and issues with concurrent use in specific disease states are presented. Use of the individual compounds during pregnancy and breastfeeding is

also discussed. Each chapter is well referenced for supplemental reading.

In addition to the illicit drugs, the text also presents the misuse, overuse, and abuse of caffeine, tobacco, and alcohol. Prescription and over the counter medications that are commonly abused are also discussed. One chapter speaks to performance enhancing drugs, including anabolic steroids and erythropoietin, while another deals with the inhalation of volatile substances. Plants and fungi are also covered.

The final sections of the book provide some general yet valuable references. The last chapter deals with the internet as a potential source of information. General websites within the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom are cited, as well as websites for specific topics. In addition, several user-oriented websites are listed. The text contains a glossary of street terminology as an appendix. A second appendix briefly reviews the primary legislation that governs drugs of abuse in the UK.

Drugs of Abuse provides an overview of issues surrounding drug abuse and detailed information about specific compounds. The text is written in a clear and concise manner and the format allows one to easily locate desired information. This book is suitable as an educational tool and will likely be a valuable clinical resource for members of the healthcare community who work with drug users.

Linda A. Felton
University of New Mexico
College of Pharmacy

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