accessed easily through the extensive list of references and, in some chapters, the references are helpfully split into general and specific categories.

Although each chapter can be read as a whole, the fact that they are generally laid out by compound means they can be 'dipped into' to obtain particular information. Unfortunately, this has to be done by referring to the contents pages because of the lack of an index in this volume. This is perhaps the single greatest shortcoming of the book. An index in each volume would allow the volume to be used on its own, and a glossary would help those who are not expert in the field.

This volume is clearly a valuable text in its own right and, although the volume was reviewed in isolation, presumably it would be further enhanced if it were used in conjunction with the other volumes in the series. Overall, this book would be a useful addition to either a personal or institutional library.

Susie J. Meade
Department of Plant and Microbial Sciences
University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4700, Christchurch, New Zealand
tel: +64 3 364 2987 extn 4848
fax: +64 3 364 2083
e-mail: S.Meade@botn.canterbury.ac.nz

Pharmaceuticals: Classes, Therapeutic Agents, Areas of Application Volume 4

Miscellaneous Drugs, Related Technology, Indexes

Volume 4, like the whole series to which it belongs, looks like a remake of an earlier version on the same topic: *Arzneimittel*, Vols 1 and 2, edited first by Gustav Ehrhart and Heinz Ruschig and also published by Verlag Chemie, Weinheim in 1968, at that time in German.

A positive aspect of this volume of the book, which deals with *Miscellaneous Drugs and Related Technology*, is that it is very comprehensive, containing chapters on 12 different topics, with anti-inflammatory-antirheumatic drugs, immunotherapy and vaccines, cancer chemotherapy, interferons, monoclonal antibodies and drug testing among them.

The book has a rather voluminous index (authors, CAS-registry numbers and subjects), which is contained in Volume 4. The volume represents a systematic listing of various therapeutic agents and related technologies, rather than a thoughtful and critical appraisal of their therapeutic value. Hence, any reader that is interested in biological mechanisms and the modification of such mechanisms for therapeutic purposes would be better placed to choose modern review articles or one of the more up-to-date textbooks of pharmacology. Obviously, the purpose of the new book is to offer read-related technologies. It should also give quick and meaningful references to readers who want to be informed in greater detail. In fact, I can think of no other purpose for a multi-volume work on pharmaceuticals that is not a pharmacological handbook or textbook.

In some chapters, for instance in the section on anti-inflammatory and anti-rheumatic drugs or in the chapter on cancer chemotherapy, the authors come close to fulfilling this mission. However, in other parts of the book they fail. Anyone who is interested in immunotherapy and vaccines could go straight to special textbooks dealing with these topics. The chapter on the interferons is succinctly written. However, it does not offer more than the most basic facts in a nutshell. Although this chapter might still satisfy the readers' expectations, the chapter on monoclonal antibodies clearly falls short. No mention is made of the many new effective agents that have been introduced in recent years (Herceptin, Rituximab, anti-fibrinogen receptor antibodies, to name but a few). Instead, we find an illustration on the dramatic increase of publications relating to monoclonal antibodies, so why simply reiterate a collection of common-place facts?

The chapter on drug testing appears to reiterate some 'eternal truths' rather than offer a critical assessment of contemporary drug research. Not a word is lost on target identification, target validation, the promise and the dilemma of modern technologies; this chapter could almost have been written 30 years ago.

A few general comments: the list of references is far from complete. Very often, the reader is referred to patents that are not easily accessible and, in general, do not match the quality of original or review articles in peer-reviewed journals. The illustrations are rather unattractive sketches that offer little more than the most essential facts. In this day and age of computer-graphics and an abundance of sophisticated illustrations in scientific journals and textbooks, the book remains clearly below acceptable standards.

In conclusion, one must wonder if this type of multi-volume comprehensive work is a worthwhile undertaking. One could argue that a high-quality work, which serves as a first orientation and offers quick and easy references to readers who seek access to a particular area of pharmaceutical R&D, is indeed still needed. However, this book fails on too many accounts to be regarded as a welcome addition to existing literature.

Jürgen Drews
International Biomedicine
Management Partners AG
House of Commerce
Aeschenplatz 7, PO Box 136
Basel, Switzerland
tel: +41 61 206 90 30
e-mail: drews@nigeons.com

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