

Book reviews

Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs: Mechanisms and Clinical Use. Eds. Alan J Lewis and Daniel E Furst. Pp. 616. US\$ 125.00. Marcel Dekker: New York. 1987. ISBN 0-8247-7685-2.

Multiauthor textbooks on non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) do not make easy bedside reading, and this is no exception. It also failed my overwhelming clinical problem at the time of reading—What could I give my wife for her low back pain while she was breast feeding our third son? The only reference in 616 pages to drug concentrations in breast milk was in the otherwise excellent opening chapter by Buchanan and Kean, who stated 'all NSAIDs are excreted into human milk and this should be remembered when treating patients who are breast feeding their infants'!

Personal problems/prejudices aside, this book did contain some useful and interesting information. The first section, 'Clinical applications of NSAIDs', included good reviews on treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile arthritis, and crystal induced arthropathies. There were also particularly interesting chapters on NSAIDs in sports medicine, for dysmenorrhoea, periodontal disease, and in cancer treatment, and these chapters in particular should be read by rheumatologists, as they look at NSAIDs from a different angle. The potential importance of NSAIDs in inhibiting prostaglandin mediated gingival bone resorption seems of particular relevance to joint disease. There was also a comprehensive review of drug interactions and a review of NSAID toxicity, which surprisingly failed to mention fibrosing alveolitis.

The second section, 'New NSAIDs', shows the book's prejudice in favour of the North American market. Fenbufen, flurbiprofen, ketoprofen, and piroxicam would hardly be considered 'new' in Great Britain. This section is a useful reference source, but somewhat turgid and restrictive owing to the similarity in presentations by the pharmaceutical company based authorship.

The final section, 'Future developments', is short and slightly disappointing. Salazopyrin and methotrexate seem established drugs rather than future developments. The discussion of glycosaminoglycan polysulphate esters in the treatment of osteoarthritis and the role of 'immunostimulation and immunorestitution' contains some thought provoking comments, however.

Overall, a useful reference book and a must for the library. Although worth a browse, I would not recommend widespread purchase, not least because many of the data most relevant to clinical rheumatologists are readily available from other sources.

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Inflammation: Basic Principles and Clinical Correlates. 1st Edn. Eds. John I Gallin, Ira M Goldstein, Ralph Snyderman. Pp. 1015. £187.50. Raven Press: New York. 1988. ISBN 0-88167-344-7.

This is a comprehensive volume providing a remarkably up to date résumé of the basic principles of the inflammatory response and its components. It is divided into four main sections describing soluble components, the cellular components, clinical correlates, and the pharmacologic modulation of inflammation. These studies are subdivided into short, discrete chapters which generally assume little previous knowledge of the topic, yet cover their subject in admirable detail. It is this feature of many short, well referenced chapters that makes this volume eminently readable for both novice and active researchers and physicians. The section of 14 chapters on clinical correlates provides good accounts on selected clinical topics but is not comprehensive, and the book appears largely scientifically orientated. It is a valuable addition to both clinical and scientific libraries.

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Note

Systemic lupus erythematosus

The second international conference on systemic lupus erythematosus will be held in Singapore from 26 to 30 November 1989. The meeting will combine clinical and scientific plenary sessions, seminars, and free papers. Further details from Dr P H Feng, Chairman Organising Committee, Second International Conference on SLE, Department of Medicine IV, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Moulmein Road, Singapore 1130.