

available there. More information on the newer 5-hydroxytryptamine (5-HT) specific drugs could be provided as well as on lofepramine. In addition, data on relative risk in overdose might be of value. In the "Psychoses" chapter sulphiride is not mentioned, nor is there a detailed 'database' for any depot preparation. In chapter four on "Anxiety and insomnia" propranolol and barbiturates should perhaps be awarded more space and in chapter six on "Substance abuse" the pharmacology of alcohol itself is not covered. Also missing is a chapter on epilepsy which would be of value to most psychiatrists.

Overall, then, a useful book for the shelf of the consultant and helpful for the trainee. While the subject matter may not be immediately attractive, it is important, and if the psychiatrist on the mental health team does not understand drug pharmacology, who is going to? This book provides a reasonably easy access to the necessary information. Unfortunately it is a little spoilt by some of the omissions, but aside from these it seems fairly complete.

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Clinical Pharmacology in Psychiatry from Molecular Studies to Clinical Reality. Edited by S. G. DHAL and L. F. GRAM. 1989. 330 pp. DM98.00.

This volume is a collection of papers presented at an international meeting held in Norway in 1988. As such the chapters are very heterogeneous. Although of a high quality, the immediate relevance to clinical psychiatry is not great. The subject matter ranges from the classification of receptors, through the genetics of drug metabolism, to drug level monitoring.

There is a useful chapter on drugs affecting D1 and D2 receptors; evidence is now emerging that D1 receptor blockade is important in the action of some drugs such as clozapine and the thioxanthines.

A chapter on meta-analysis suggests that serotonin-specific reuptake blockers are less effective as antidepressants than some older tricyclics.

Several chapters are concerned with individual variations in drug metabolism. In particular, hydroxylation measured by debrisoquine metabolism is deficient in 5% to 10% of Caucasians; these individuals develop higher than expected blood levels of many tricyclic antidepressants and some phenothiazines, with consequent side-effects and intolerance. Some antipsychotic drugs and some antidepressants inhibit the hydroxylation enzymes, resulting in pharmacokinetic interactions between these drugs. Tissue from human liver banks can now be used to assess drug metabolism as part of the development of new drugs, without exposing living subjects to the drug; this is surely an important advance.

The book is recommended for psychiatrists wishing to know more about the metabolism of psychotropic drugs.

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Design and Analysis of Reliability Studies. The Statistical Evaluation of Measurement Errors. By G. DUNN. Oxford: Edward Arnold. 1989. 198 pp. £25.00.

This excellent book deserves a place on the bookshelf of anyone concerned with the statistical problems of assessing the dependability or reliability of measurements. Starting from the assumption that the reader has a "level of statistical competence . . . covered by most elementary statistics courses", the book is neatly divided into three self-contained sections. In the first section, three chapters cover the basic types of mathematical measurement models (including binomial and Poisson processes as well as normal distributions), coefficients of agreement/disagreement and indices of reliability, consistency and stability. The second section is a single chapter on the often neglected topic of experimental designs for reliability studies (including consideration of sample size estimation). The final and longest section consists of three chapters on inferential methods used in the analysis of data from reliability studies; two chapters concentrate on methods appropriate for interval data while the third deals with categorical and ordinal measurements. Some essential mathematical concepts are described in detail in a series of appendices, and a list of major statistical computer packages which include the techniques dealt with in the book is also provided.

The techniques covered constitute a comprehensive guide to the statistical methods widely used in reliability studies. All of the methods are explained clearly, supplementing the rigorous mathematical descriptions supplied. The liberal use of worked examples clearly drawn from real clinical situations are particularly helpful. The mathematical notation used follows standard conventions and is consistent throughout the book.

The book contains one glaring omission. In their seminal paper, Bland & Altman (1985; *Lancet*, *i*, 307-308) argue forcibly that the assessment of reliability is not entirely a matter of statistical significance testing. Indeed, they show an example in which one of the statistical techniques advocated in this book leads to an erroneous conclusion. Bland & Altman advocate a confidence limit approach to reliability estimation, which essentially supplies an estimate of the probability that the difference between two supposedly identical measurements will lie within a clinically acceptable range. This approach usefully combines both statistical and clinical significance, but is totally ignored by Dunn.

There is also some doubt in my mind that the author has correctly identified his potential audience. A level of