
The first edition of this book (by Rang and Dale) was the successor to "Applied Pharmacology" by their teacher H.O. Schild. Since the first edition of this book 18 years ago, it has come a long way commensurate with advances in pharmacology. Both the number and the size of the pages have increased as well as the quality of the publication.

The recently published fifth edition is colorful and extremely pleasing to the eye which makes reading a pleasure. The basic physiology given at the beginning of each chapter helps to better understand the pharmacological actions of drugs. Historical details are also given at relevant places. The illustrations are excellent. The diagram giving the mechanism of selectivity of COX-2 inhibitors (Figure 16.2) deserves special mention.

The chapter on molecular aspects of drug action is well explained. The complex details are written lucidly. Recent advances and newer drugs are included in most of the chapters in systemic pharmacology. A chapter on drug discovery has been newly added in this edition. With the advances in the field of pharmacogenetics and pharmacogenomics, a separate chapter could have been dedicated for these topics. Even though it is mentioned that oral rehydration is the first priority in treatment of diarrhea (Page 376) nothing is said about oral rehydration salt (ORS).

All the references are annotated. The annotations help the readers who want to read the original articles. It also may help to nurture the habit of reading scientific journals right from the undergraduate days.

I have enjoyed the book so much that there is little by way of criticism that I have to offer. The errata given in the inside cover of the front page is incomplete. More errors could be found, such as one in the ordinate scale of Figure 2.7. It is also erroneously given that ipratropium bromide is used as an adjunct to “B2 adrenoceptor antagonists” and steroids in asthma (Page 347) and that parietal cells have muscarinic M2 receptors (Page 369).

All in all, this is a well illustrated and updated book which will make pharmacology (a subject which is usually dubbed by students as dull and boring) more interesting, less daunting and better understood. I would not hesitate to recommend it to undergraduate medical students.

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