

BOOK REVIEWS

Drug Therapy 1999. A Critical Review of Therapeutics.

Gibaldi M. McGraw-Hill, Montreal, Quebec, 1999.

Hardcover, 488 pages. \$77.45.

This book reviews recent data on a variety of topics. It is divided into 10 sections, each of which includes discussions of new drugs and evaluations of recently published clinical trials. The sections cover the usual therapeutics categories, such as cardiology and infectious diseases. In each category, the author comments on selected information from a variety of sources, including clinical trials published in medical and scientific journals, government announcements, and excerpts from prestigious newspapers, newsletters, and trade magazines.

The book has several limitations. The author has reviewed important clinical trials but only from a small selection of medical journals, specifically the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *The Lancet*, the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, and a few others. The evaluation of the clinical trials is mostly descriptive and not always critical. A lot of information is derived from trade papers. Each topic is discussed only briefly, which does not give pharmacists enough detail to fully integrate the information into their practice.

This book would probably be best defined as a reference book, because it is a compilation of data, but

it belongs in a class of its own. Described by the author as a “chronicle of progress”, this critical review of therapeutics is in fact a mix of clinical trial evaluations, Food and Drug Administration approval lists, and excerpts similar to the ones published in the *Pharmacist's Letter*. This volume represents an enormous amount of work for a single author, but it is not user friendly and is unfortunately quickly becoming out of date (the most recent references are from 1998). Furthermore, some sections are specific to the American market and cannot be extrapolated to the Canadian situation. The latest issues in drug therapy are better disseminated in a newsletter or journal format, as the turnaround time between redaction and publication is much faster.

This book might help someone doing a superficial review of pharmacotherapy, but it will not help solve daily problems. The purchase price of almost \$100.00 could be better spent on other references that would be more useful for hospital pharmacists.

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