
The editors (engineer-doctor in the pharmaceutical industry and doctor-experimental biologist in academia respectively) have brought together from 38 contributors (many well-known names), 24 interesting essays broadly grouped under origins, presentation, therapies and human investigation. Six chapters are ‘unusual’ as their subject matter is generally not covered in other books: biological rhythms (a fascinating insight into the chronicity of ulcer disease); and anti-ulcer therapy (a welcome glimpse into free-radical mucosal damage); ulcer disease, what is known and what questions remain (the latter aspect needs expanding); statistical methods in trials of anti-ulcer drug treatment (the theory seems so much simpler than practical); meta-analysis (a growth industry); and an academic investigator’s perspective (a leading authority’s viewpoint). Three other chapters deal with the role of an independent clinical research organisation in the development of new drugs, the industry’s perspective of human investigation and development of anti-ulcer drugs and the clinical investigation of anti-ulcer drugs in Japan. These restrict how close basic scientific clinical investigation, the pharmaceutical industry, and the regulatory authorities have come together.

There are detailed up to date reviews on treatment with antacids, histamine H2 receptor antagonists, colloidal bismuth subcitrate, omeprazole, and proton pump inhibitors. The remaining essays deal with pathophysiology (detailed); clinical presentation (somewhat misleading title); NSAID gastropathy (by two rheumatologists: good to see a non-gastroenterologist’s viewpoint!); haemorrhage from peptic ulcer (with particular emphasis on the role of drug therapy); endoscopic therapy of bleeding peptic ulcer (‘a hot topic’ and surgical treatment (concise; tightly written). All chapters have abundant references. Inevitably, there is some overlap but this does not detract.

It is hard to believe so much has happened in peptic ulcer disease in just 20 short-long years. Final verdict: a good book for beginners and old-hands alike; well done, editors and authors, $172.50 (surely a rip-off?), perhaps the publishers want only well-off libraries to purchase this volume.

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