

BOOK REVIEWS

ORAL HYPOGLYCEMIC AGENTS: PHARMACOLOGY AND THERAPEUTICS, G. D. Campbell, *First Published Edition*, \$19.50, 482 pages, London and New York, Academic Press, 1969.

Oral hypoglycemic agents were introduced into general medical use fourteen years ago. They have subsequently been widely prescribed and have profoundly influenced diabetes research. Despite their therapeutic importance, *Oral Hypoglycemic Agents: Pharmacology and Therapeutics* is the first book that is completely devoted to this important subject.

This volume, the ninth in the series *Medicinal Chemistry*, is edited by G. D. Campbell. Dr. Campbell has assembled fifteen men representing seven countries as contributors to this book. Although all of the chapters are written in English the diverse language backgrounds of the authors lead to a lack of uniformity of style from chapter to chapter.

The first three chapters describe the history, structure-activity relationship, and pharmacology of the sulfonylureas. The tightly compressed factual material does not make for easy reading and these chapters have a reference book or compendium quality. The authors are from France and Germany and these chapters are most valuable to the American reader, because their extensive bibliographies furnish an introduction to the European sulfonylurea literature. Chapter three alone contains 636 references.

The next three chapters dealing with sulfonylureas in the management of human diabetes and the hypoglycemic guanidine derivatives are more readable than their predecessors. The chapter entitled "The Clinical Use of the Hypoglycaemic Guanidine Derivatives" by H. Mehnert and H. S. Sadow is particularly well done.

The concluding three chapters stand in sharp contrast to one another. Dr. Campbell's "Oral Treatment of Diabetes in Tropical Countries" is not as exotic a topic as its title suggests, for many of the therapeutic problems described, such as long-standing eating habits, insulin injection technics, and the cost of oral agents can be encountered in the large diabetes clinics in this country.

"Other Oral Hypoglycemic Agents" by G. A. Stewart and T. Hanley is the outstanding contribution in the book. It is a thoughtful, critical and thoroughly readable appraisal of such diverse substances as salicylates, hypoglycins, carnitine, and the adrenergic blocking agents. It also contains a concise description of the Randle "glucose-fatty acid cycle" and places are suggested where pharmacological agents could favorably alter the cycle.

The concluding chapter entitled "Non-Diabetic Uses of Oral Hypoglycemic Agents" is an uncritical compilation of many miscellaneous uses that have been suggested for oral hypoglycemic agents. The reader is left with the impression that oral hypoglycemics are helpful in treating seborrheic dermatitis, the ascites of cirrhosis and fatty liver. Statements such as "patients treated with tolbutamide keep a remarkably clear scalp and are practically free from skin complications" seem oddly out of place in a book of this nature.

This book is a useful reference source to the oral hypoglycemic literature and it will be very helpful to persons engaged in clinical and basic studies with these agents. Many diabetologists, endocrinologists, and perhaps some general internists will also want to have it in their personal library. Other physicians and medical students will refer to it on occasion, if it is available in their hospital library.

PROTEIN AND POLYPEPTIDE HORMONES, *Proceedings of the International Symposium, Liege, May 19-25, 1969*. M. Margoulies, Editor. \$55.00, 939 pages, Amsterdam, Excerpta Medica Foundation, 1969.

This volume is a remarkably up-to-date source of information in four different, rapidly advancing areas in the field of protein and polypeptide hormones:

- 1) radioimmunoassay of protein and peptide hormones
- 2) lipolysis and lipogenesis
- 3) structure—activity relationships
- 4) mode of action of these hormones on transport mechanisms.

In each of these areas the volume contains a series of invited papers, a series of contributed papers and a wealth of vigorous discussion.

This volume is a must for researchers in any of the above-cited areas, for a good deal of the information presented and discussed is unavailable elsewhere. Particularly valuable is the exchange of current technical and methodological information regarding radioimmunoassay. Aside from researchers directly involved in the fields covered by the symposium, other endocrinologists, physiologists and biochemists who are interested in protein and peptide hormones will find much in the volume to excite their interest.

The sponsors of the symposium did an unusual job in assembling a distinguished and knowledgeable group of participants, in organizing the symposium in a superb manner, and in achieving very rapid publication.

This generally fine symposium is marred, however, by several annoying aspects in format. The volume would be much easier to use if the invited papers, the contributed papers and the discussions on a particular topic were combined rather than scattered in three different sections of the book. It is often difficult from reading the remarks of a discussant to know the context in which the remarks were made. At the very least the presented papers should be followed by a page cross-reference to the pertinent discussion.

The \$55 cost of this 939-page monograph is substantial, but understandable. However, consideration should be given to subdividing the monograph into four separate monographs, each devoted to one major topic. Such a breakdown would permit a nonaffluent researcher with a major interest in only one of the four areas covered by the symposium to purchase a monograph of particular interest to him without unnecessary expense.