

Progress in Drug Metabolism, Volume 1

Edited by J. W. Bridges and L. F. Chasseaud
John Wiley and Sons; London, New York, Sydney, Toronto, 1976
xiii + 286 pages. \$ 19.75, £ 9.80

In this the first volume of 'Progress in Drug Metabolism' the editors have collected together five articles the titles of which quite clearly reflect the current situation in the world of drug metabolism. The volume begins with a chapter on the application of mass spectrometry in drug metabolism followed by a chapter on Bioactivation and Cytotoxicity. Chapter 3 is devoted to the role of epoxides in bioactivation and carcinogenesis and in Chapter 4 microsomal enzyme induction is viewed from the clinical viewpoint. A final contribution deals with the interactions of drugs with serum proteins.

Happily, the enormous amount of information which has been accumulated on the metabolism, toxicity and behaviour in vivo of many individual drugs has now been evaluated so that one can see several woods in place of a plethora of fascinating but nonetheless confusing trees. The titles reflect this and also illustrate the number of diverse avenues which drug metabolism has pervaded.

The editors are to be congratulated on their timely venture and for bringing together a series of chapters which not only pinpoint areas of progress but which also discuss what D. V. Parke aptly describes in the preface as 'general fundamentals'. All the chapters are

very readable and should have wide appeal for their clarity and information content. The editors are now faced with the difficult task of ensuring that the subject matter and the contributions to succeeding volumes maintain the high standard established in Volume 1. One is a little uneasy about this in relation to the note added in proof to the chapter on epoxides. The chapter itself deals splendidly with the principles of epoxide formation and many examples are given. The temptation should have been resisted to add recently published further examples. This sort of addition is symptomatic and provides fuel for the mistaken view that drug metabolism studies are a stamp collecting exercise.

Drug metabolism studies have recently come of age for they are now recognised as providing valuable illuminating information on basic biochemical phenomena. Scientific respectability has been achieved by the emergence and recognition of fundamental principles. The first volume of 'Progress in Drug Metabolism' is a testament to these facts. By providing an overview of various aspects of drug metabolism, an important gap has been filled.

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