

long-term occlusion, although the fact that 24-hour patch application may inhibit underlying sweat glands for 72 hours afterwards should provide a note of caution. There may be problems in the future associated with tissue trauma when patches are regularly peeled from the skin.

A fundamental problem with all treatments via percutaneous absorption is the high barrier resistance to permeation of the horny layer. One possibility for the future would be to diminish radically this resistance by incorporating into the patch an efficient penetration enhancer. Thus we can expect to see a growing interest in the concept of combining potent drugs with active penetration enhancers in transdermal delivery systems. Another technique employs the potential of iontophoresis and many teams are working in this area.

This book of 18 chapters deals with many of these aspects of transdermal therapy and, as for most multiauthored texts, the treatments tend to cover a spectrum of interest and usefulness. An opening chapter is noteworthy for the extravagant use of space for photographs of medicated plasters and transdermal patches, together with tables of lists of ingredients. There follows a section composed of seven chapters which deal with the development and preclinical assessments of transdermal therapeutic systems. As for many such

compilations, there is considerable repetition between the chapters, in particular with respect to multiple reproductions of diffusion cell design. A section on clinical assessments of these systems comprises four chapters which consider nitroglycerin, clonidine and bupranolol. The two chapters on nitroglycerin are particularly valuable in the way in which they emphasize the clinical drawbacks of transdermal nitroglycerin, concentrating on the different susceptibilities displayed by patients and the problems of resistance and tolerance to this drug. The clonidine chapter draws attention to local skin reactions and the discussion on the bupranolol patch reports encouraging initial results for a drug which is subjected to extensive first-pass metabolism in the liver.

The final two sections on engineering and manufacturing of transdermal systems (3 chapters) and regulatory requirements among international authorities (3 chapters on the U.S.A., U.K., and Japan) complete a book which all workers in the transdermal field will need to have on their shelves, despite the publication in recent years of several similar compilations.

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Diseases of the Hair and Nails. By Howard P. Baden, M.D. Year Book Medical Publishers, Inc., Chicago, 1987 (236 pp. \$52.25)

In the preface to this book, the author clearly states that it is not intended as a definitive treatise in the field, but is meant to provide help in the diagnosis and differential diagnosis of hair and nail diseases, to be kept handy for consultation and "assist the practitioner in recognizing the numerous disorders of the appendages." It is aimed at the dermatologist and physician in training for dermatology, the primary care physician, internist, and paediatrician. This is quite an undertaking in 224 pages, but it is largely achieved, at least with regard to the written word. The text is superbly succinct and apposite in most sections, at its best in the scientific descriptions, as one would expect knowing Howard Baden's expertise in the field.

But there are many deficiencies: Why no hirsutism, hypertrichosis, or lanugohair? Nail embryology is included but no equivalent hair section. In the nail mycosis description it is stated that non-dermatophytes may be diagnosed by the presence of hyphae

plus negative culture. What about cyclohexamide-free medium? The nail surgery parts are rather incomplete, both in detail and emphasis. The main criticism must lie with the insufficient number of color illustrations, bearing in mind the aims of the book. Modern color reproduction is no longer prohibitively expensive and is surely necessary for the readership defined for this book. If one disagrees with this, then all the black and white figures must be of the highest quality; unfortunately, many of the clinical pictures are of poor quality and rather irritatingly, the legends frequently use words such as redness, erythema, telangiectasia. Because of these limitations, the book can only be recommended to any of the prefatorial groups listed as an adjunct to more detailed texts or those with satisfactory color illustrations.

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