

BOOK REVIEW



FARMAKOTERAPIJSKI PRIRUČNIK (A HANDBOOK OF PHARMACOTHERAPY), by Božidar Vrhovac and Željko Reiner, eds. Med-Ekon, Zagreb, 2000, 706 pages.

The third edition of the book *Farmakoterapijski priručnik* (A Handbook of Pharmacotherapy), edited by Božidar Vrhovac and Željko Reiner, appeared at the beginning of 2000, at the very 20th anniversary of its first edition. Thumbing through the first and this, latest edition reveals considerable advancements in the field of pharmacotherapy and presentation of new concepts in a very concise and transparent manner. The present edition contains a number of very useful new sections, such as general guidelines, drug side effects, drugs and sports, prescribing drugs to the elderly and children, and others. The Editors-in-Chief and 53 coauthors have succeeded in their intention to produce a Handbook that will be equally useful to all medical professionals, from medical students

through general practitioners to specialists and pharmacists.

All drugs registered in the Republic of Croatia have been included in the Handbook, which is commendable, and which must have required great efforts to collect instructions for use from numerous international pharmaceutical industries. The Handbook provides up-to-date information, presenting all drugs registered in the Republic of Croatia by June 30, 1999.

The new Handbook has retained the good tradition from the first edition by providing an introduction to the chapters on the group of drugs for the treatment of particular diseases (e.g., the treatment of anemias, infection, etc.). There are instructions for the prophylactic use of antimicrobial agents, which remains a 'sticking point' for many professionals. The most extensive chapter of the book (80 pages) is dedicated, with good reason, to the management of systemic infections. This is no surprise, because these are most expensive drugs where rationalization is necessary indeed. It is very convenient for the potential readers that the dosage of all drugs is expressed in defined daily dose (DDD), which may prove highly useful for less experienced physicians. Due space is also dedicated to drug interactions (45 pages), an inadequately known phenomenon where polypragmasy is still largely present in patient treatment.

As a constant, the thought of Božidar Vrhovac, Editor-in-Chief, an uncompromising advocate of rational therapy, who has been as passionately struggling for the role of clinical pharmacotherapy in medicine, evidenced from the first to the third edition of the Handbook, runs throughout the text.

In addition to all this, the Handbook is attractive for compactness of its format, containing all that is necessary for daily therapy, thus it should be on the desk, at hand to every physician engaged in patient therapy.

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