Book review

An introduction to clinical pharmaceutics

Alexander T. Florence. Published by Pharmaceutical Press, ISBN: 9780853696919

This introductory textbook considers the role of basic pharmaceutics in determining or modifying clinical outcomes. It also examines the behaviour of medicines within the body and how adverse drug reactions can result from formulations and excipients. It is written by Alexander T. Florence who is a former Dean of the School of Pharmacy, University of London, UK. The intended target audience is the undergraduate pharmacy student although it also provides a useful update on the relevance of clinical pharmaceutics for practitioners working in the field. This book will encourage the reader to apply the principles of clinical pharmaceutics to common therapeutic problems and help modify clinical outcomes for the patient.

The introduction states that this textbook is neither a formulation textbook nor a pharmaceutics textbook, but attempts to connect concepts which are part of the majority of pharmaceutics curricula to a wider clinical practice base. The book employs numerous cases and examples from the literature as learning aids. These references are current and come from a wide variety of sources. The book commences by addressing the essential question 'what is clinical pharmaceutics?' by using as many examples as possible. Chapter 2 focuses on the use of excipients which are often considered to be inert. Examples of excipients which have caused problems in paediatric and adult medicines are provided. Chapter 3 confirms the importance of chemistry to the discipline by emphasising how a knowledge of chemistry can help solve a therapeutic problem or prevent

an adverse event. Chapter 4 encourages the reader to look at formulations as dosage forms to aid drug delivery in a reproducible manner which can on occasion lead to adverse events. Chapter 5 then considers those adverse events which are caused by the formulation and how this may influence outcome. The example of protein aggregation in insulin pumps is discussed in detail as are the problems associated with drug-eluting stents. A brief discussion on nanosystems is also provided at the end of this chapter. Chapter 6 examines medicines for the young and old and discusses the need for formulations specifically tailored to these populations. A section on enteral feeding provides an important list of liquid medications which are physically incompatible with most enteral feeds. Chapter 7 examines the issue of generic medicines and highlights the differences in the evaluation of generic medicines when the drug is a small molecule and when it is a large biological agent. The final chapter examines the future forms which medicines may take particularly as we move towards personalized medicines. A specific section discusses the future role which nanotechnology may play in the future of drug delivery.

This book describes all of the principles underpinning clinical pharmaceutics using relevant examples and clinical case studies. It is reasonably priced as a textbook and helps to demonstrate how basic pharmaceutics can improve clinical outcome and avoid adverse events.

Competing Interests

There are no competing interests to declare.

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