Book review

New Drugs and Targets for Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (CDPD)

Edited by T. T. Hansel & P. J. Barnes (series editor C. T. Bolliger). Published by S Karger AG, 2010. 310 pp, price £158.67, ISBN-10: 3805595662; ISBN-13: 978-3805595667

This book, edited by Professor Peter Barnes and Dr Trevor Hansel, is a follow-up to an earlier volume on this subject by the same editors in 2001 published by Karger Press under the auspices of the *Progress in Respiratory Disease* series. The current volume provides a timely update on the wide number of drugs under evaluation for the treatment of asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), both diseases having continuing clear unmet medical needs. This volume is very comprehensive and draws on the expertise of authors working as scientists and/or clinicians in both the academic and the industrial world. The book is beautifully illustrated (80 figures and 46 tables, of which 67 are in full colour) and, as stated in the Foreword by Professor Bolliger, presents cutting-edge data, including 'publications of up to 2010' and in some chapters useful information on patents around some of the newer targets under investigation where there is not yet a comprehensive literature; as such, this volume is even more than a series of state-of-the-art reviews.

Professor Barnes and Dr Hansel are to be congratulated on providing a volume that will undoubtedly become a very useful resource for the many people working in this field, covering as it does everything from early-stage projects still at the laboratory level through to drugs very close to becoming prescription drugs for the treatment of asthma and/or COPD. All of the chapters are well organized, clearly written and organized into appropriate sections within the book, so that particular drug classes can be readily located. The chapters are supported by high-quality and useful figures, which ensure that the material covered is readily accessible and not lost in dense prose.

It is very difficult to identify an area of drug development not covered in this volume, which of course reflects the editors' wide knowledge of the considerable research

activities going on in this field; however, if I had to make one constructive suggestion to improve future volumes, it would have been helpful to have had a chapter reviewing the enormous amount of research going on in this field with improving drug delivery to the lungs. The increasing variety of novel approaches to the delivery of drugs to the lungs is sometimes bewildering, even to people in the field, and certainly just about all of the drugs Barnes and Hansel review in this volume will ultimately be administered by this topical route. Additionally, it is also now increasingly being recognized that COPD in particular has many systemic (nonpulmonary) manifestations that are probably legitimate targets for drug treatment in order to improve the overall quality of life of patients suffering from this disorder. This research effort has already identified drugs being used for indications other than the treatment of lung disease that have value in the treatment of patients with COPD, e.g. statins. There is likely to be much more pharmacological research activity in the coming decade in finding treatments for these systemic manifestations, and indeed some drugs already used for the treatment of COPD are known to have useful systemic effects, e.g. theophylline, and the newest drug class recently approved for the treatment of COPD is an orally administered drug (roflumilast N-oxide). Despite the wide array of targets reviewed in this volume edited by Hansel and Barnes, it is clear that future 'drug hunters' in the field of respiratory diseases will need to think outside of their comfort zone.

Competing Interests

There are no competing interests to declare.

Clive Page

CORRESPONDENCE

Clive Page, Sackler Institute of Pulmonary Pharmacology, Institute of Pharmaceutical Science, King's College London, 5th floor, Franklin Wilkins Building, 150 Stamford Street, London SE1 9NH, UK. E-mail: clive.page@kcl.ac.uk

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