

**1982
Drugs
of
Choice
1983**

**Walter Modell
Editor**

DRUGS OF CHOICE

1982-1983

WALTER MODELL, M.D., Editor

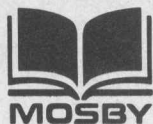
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Illustrated



The C. V. Mosby Company

ST. LOUIS • TORONTO • LONDON 1982



A TRADITION OF PUBLISHING EXCELLENCE

Editor: John E. Lotz
Design: Jeanne Bush
Production: Gail Morey Hudson, Ginny Douglas

1982-1983 EDITION

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Previous edition copyrighted 1980, first edition copyrighted 1958

Printed in the United States of America

The C.V. Mosby Company
11830 Westline Industrial Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63141

The Library of Congress cataloged this serial as follows:

Drugs of choice, 1958/59—

St. Louis, C.V. Mosby Co.

v. 26 cm.

Editor: 1958/59— W. Modell

Includes bibliography.

1. Pharmacology. 2. Therapeutics. 3. Drugs. I. Modell, Walter, 1907— ed.

RM101.D75 615.1 58-6889

ISBN 0-8016-3475X

GW/D/D 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 01/C/080

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*Let's hurry, hurry,
use the new drug before it stops curing.*

ATTRIBUTED TO TROUSSEAU

Preface

This book is a practical guide to the selection of the best drug for a particular therapeutic problem. Because of the extremely fertile mating of the synthetic chemist and the pharmaceutical manufacturer, in the recent past new drugs appeared on the market almost too quickly for the physician to learn the names, to say nothing of distinguishing which were the same drugs with different proprietary names. It was a herculean job to learn enough about them to evaluate their relative therapeutic merits. The present decline in the drug birth rate has made learning their names simpler, but some of the latest additions are so new and some so very complex in their pharmacologic and toxicologic actions that it requires substantial information to choose them well and to use them safely. In addition, so much more is being learned about interactions of drugs with other drugs, with environmental contaminants, and with foods that the choice of new drugs is still a difficult matter. Yet the choice of the right drug will determine whether the patient receives the most judicious therapy. The proper use of the drug may also determine the outcome of the patient's condition.

There are obvious advantages in choosing the best drug for the clinical problem at the outset of treatment. For the seriously ill patient, time may be precious, and if the first choice is the best drug for the situation, that irretrievable commodity is not wasted. Something short of the best may provide incomplete relief, no relief at all, untoward effects, or disaster. The patient is likely to assume, and perhaps he also has the right to expect, that the physician will provide the optimum drug for his condition the first time a prescription is written. It is

understandable that, having endured a period of unsatisfactory treatment, the patient may be reluctant to continue an obvious trial-and-error process. For the physician's part, it is not feasible to plead that there is no other way of determining the best drug.

A bad initial impression of a drug often leads to enduring and unshakable prejudice and causes the physician to avoid using it in situations in which it is eminently useful and safe. Nothing is more likely to lead to a bad first impression than ignorance of limitations and interactions; conversely, nothing is more likely to lead to appropriate first impressions of a new drug than the knowledge that enables the physician to select the best drug for the therapeutic target; that is to say, the *drug of choice*. Yet there is almost nowhere for the physician to turn for the kind of help needed—certainly no place where unbiased, authoritative, and definitive information bearing on this problem is brought together and made easily available. This volume is designed to satisfy this need by bringing together knowledge that is presently spread through the various specialties, and, if published at all, published separately. It is a volume of expert *opinion* designed to provide the American physician with a comprehensive source of clear, concise, authoritative, and practical answers to the continually recurring question of which drug in a rapidly changing scene is, at the critical moment, the drug of choice for an actual therapeutic problem.

Many experts and educators in medicine have participated in the preparation of this book. Each was requested to express *his own opinion* of the drugs in current use in his field based on his special-

ized knowledge and experience. Controversy was avoided, because to be fairly explored controversy must be considered in great detail. Such discussions in the usual format of the review article often leave the reader still seeking the clear and definitive answer. Although the existence of controversy may be indicated, the issues will not be argued here, since such argument would defeat our purpose.

The warm reception given the twelve previous editions of *Drugs of Choice* has proved that the medical profession recognizes the present urgent need for authoritative and unbiased information on the choice of a particular drug for a particular clinical situation. This has been most gratifying to the contributors, who work very hard to make an up-to-date book of this type possible. A well-timed revision is, however, essential if the book is to remain useful by being sufficiently up to date.

Trial has shown that a 2-year interval between revisions is a satisfactory one. A shorter period would be too brief for substantial experience with the drugs introduced in the interval, and there would be too few new drugs to merit a new edition, whereas a longer period would allow the current edition to become badly dated before a new one was available.

Recent legal and quasi-legal actions of the F.D.A. have created new and special problems and responsibilities for the practitioner. These are discussed in detail in the Introduction, which is recommended as practical as well as protective reading.

To provide fresh insights and a forum for different points of view, the authorship of a few chapters, especially those on controversial issues, has been changed in each edition. During recent years there has been a relative lull in the rate of new drug development, which has provided a good opportunity for substantial reevaluation of opinion. Accordingly, all chapters have been thoroughly revised, one of them has been entirely rewritten, and two have been written by new authors. In the course of this revision, my friend Paul L. McLain, senior author of the chapter on agents for the maintenance of internal homeostasis, died. I learned of this unhappy event when it was too late to make other arrangements for revision of his chapter. Fortunately, there have been no significant advances in the field since the last edition was published, and therefore Dr. McLain's and Dr. Franke's chapter is published as it appeared in the previous edition. Despite this, the current edition represents a substantial revision.

Many of the drugs available have not been mentioned in the text. Failure to discuss a new drug may be interpreted to mean that the drug was introduced too recently to provide sufficient clinical experience for a truly substantial opinion by my standards. Failure to discuss an older drug may be interpreted to mean that it is not a drug of choice, and in my opinion, it is not of sufficient importance to merit discussion.

Walter Modell, M.D.

Contents

Introduction: legal complications in the clinical use of new drugs, 1
Walter Modell, M.D.

1 Principles for the choice of drugs, 3
Walter Modell, M.D.

2 Drugs and age, 21
Phillip D. Walson, M.D.
Rubin Bressler, M.D.

3 Adverse drug reactions and alternative drugs of choice, 41
Phillip S. Norman, M.D.

4 Agents to adjust and maintain internal homeostasis, 64
†Paul L. McLain, M.D.
Frederick R. Franke, M.D., D.Sc. (Med.)

5 Diuretics, 91
Walter Modell, M.D.

6 Drugs for nutritional disorders, 105
Robert E. Hodges, M.D.
Jack L. Smith, Ph.D.

7 Local antiseptics, 136
Peter Dineen, M.D.

8 Antibacterial drugs, 142
Peter Dineen, M.D.

9 Drugs for malaria, 161
W.D. Tigertt, M.D.

10 Antiviral, antispirochetal, and antirickettsial drugs, 166
Richard B. Hornick, M.D.

11 Drugs for treating affective disorders, 177
Leo E. Hollister, M.D.

- 12** Medullary stimulants, 188
Leroy D. Vandam, M.D.
- 13** Analgesics, 195
Lawrence M. Halpern, Ph.D.
John J. Bonica, M.D., D.Sc., F.F.A.R.C.S.
- 14** Anesthetics, 236
Joseph F. Artusio, Jr., M.D.
- 15** Drugs for treating anxiety, 256
Leo E. Hollister, M.D.
- 16** Hypnotics, 265
Louis Lasagna, M.D.
- 17** Anticonvulsants, 271
Dewey K. Ziegler, M.D.
- 18** Drugs for Parkinson's disease, 289
Fletcher H. McDowell, M.D.
- 19** Drugs for overeating, 294
Walter Modell, M.D.
- 20** Antiemetic drugs, 305
J. Weldon Bellville, M.D.
- 21** Drugs in disorders of the gastrointestinal tract, 318
Herbert Rakatansky, M.D., F.A.C.P.
- 22** Drugs for intestinal parasitism, 360
Donald W. Hoskins, M.D.
- 23** Drugs for diseases of the heart, 374
Arthur C. DeGraff, M.D.
- 24** Drugs for arterial hypertension, 408
Ray W. Gifford, Jr., M.D.
- 25** Drugs for arterial hypotension and shock, 432
Leroy D. Vandam, M.D.
- 26** Vasodilator drugs for peripheral vascular disturbances, 445
John H. Moyer, M.D., D.Sc.
A.A. Messeih, M.D., M.R.C.P.(UK)

- 27** Antitussive drugs, 454
Hylan A. Bickerman, M.D.
- 28** Antiallergic drugs, 471
Hylan A. Bickerman, M.D.
- 29** Drugs for disturbances in equilibrium, 501
Hylan A. Bickerman, M.D.
- 30** Antidiabetic drugs, 514
William J. Wishner, M.D.
- 31** Drugs for diseases of the endocrine system, 524
Melvin Horwith, M.D.
- 32** Drugs for arthritis and rheumatic disease, 562
W.H. Kammerer, M.D.
Stephen A. Paget, M.D., F.A.C.P.
- 33** Drugs for cancer, 583
Jerome B. Block, M.D.
Neil A. Lachant, M.D.
Rowan T. Chlebowski, M.D., Ph.D.
- 34** Drugs for hematologic disorders, 620
Lawrence S. Lessin, M.D., F.A.C.P.
Kenneth Goldstein, M.D., F.A.C.P.
- 35** Drugs affecting the coagulation of blood, 641
William W. Coon, M.D.
- 36** Drugs for urologic disorders, 656
Mohammad Amin, M.D.
Robert Lich, Jr., M.S. (Path.), M.D.
- 37** Drugs for ophthalmic use, 675
Irving H. Leopold, M.D., D.Sc. (Med.)
- 38** Drugs in dermatologic therapy, 696
Eugene J. Van Scott, M.D.
Ruey J. Yu, Ph.D.

Legal complications in the clinical use of new drugs

Walter Modell, M.D.

Tozer and Kasik, experts in medico-legal developments, believe that in his own defense the physician in general practice would be wise to tell all his patients about their diseases and drugs prescribed in detail to enable them to give a truly informed consent and that it would be wise also to record a careful resume of the conversation.

In addition, to minimize the risk of suit for an injury caused by a drug, Tozer and Kasik say that the physician first "might consider whether he should prescribe any drug with which he is not thoroughly familiar; familiar, that is, with its chemistry, mode of action, contraindications, side effects and the means of treating whatever adverse reactions it might precipitate.

"Second, he should know his patient in relation to the proposed drug. The pertinent history must be taken and recorded and any suggested tests for sensitivity and pre-disposition to reactions must be performed.

"Third, he must be able to justify the use of the drug with its dangers, as opposed to other drugs and other methods of treatment. . . .

"Fourth, he should watch for, and follow up, all symptoms and signs which might indicate an adverse reaction and he should stop treatment with the drug when such symptoms appear unless there is some overriding consideration.

"Finally, he might consider keeping a diary in which to record the names of all patients who have received each drug so that when he receives a new warning from

a detail man or a revised product card or a 'Dear Doctor' letter he can pass the warning on to every patient taking that drug without having to make a major search of his files to discover their names."

There is also the question of whether in the case of every drug he prescribes he should have at hand and be prepared to apply the proper emergency treatment for a reaction.

Many aspects of the F.D.A.'s attitude deeply concern the medical profession and the practice of medicine.

Information on the proper use of drugs develops with continued clinical experience. Package inserts, when prepared shortly before a new drug is released, cannot provide a final account of a drug. By the very nature of the drug problem, even if an insert is written by an unbiased expert, it must contain many statements that will have to be altered as experience accumulates. For every single drug the determination of actual efficacy, proper dosage, and safe use requires substantial experience by the general practitioner as well as by the expert. "It is held by many that it takes about five years before a truly definitive statement can be made about a drug. This implies that there must be free and unrestricted expression of opinion and publication of experience with drugs already officially described and delimited in F.D.A. inserts if progress is to be made in therapeutics and if errors by the F.D.A. are to be promptly published and rectified."

We are afraid of therapeutic regimens

that are guided by legal rather than clinical considerations. We are also afraid of "defensive" therapy. To those who want to use the best drug in the best way for each patient in each instance, I offer this book whose contributors are recognized authorities in their respective fields. They have had clinical experience with the drugs they write about. They have seen the dosage regimens they recommend work in their patients. They have had the experience necessary to rec-

ommend the drugs they do. Expertise and experience and nothing else—no other considerations dictate the drugs and dosages recommended here.

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Principles for the choice of drugs

Walter Modell, M.D.

Essential pharmacologic information, 3
Bearing of experimental data on clinical utility of drugs, 3
Nature of chemical relationships of drugs to clinical use, 5
Patterns of drug action, 6
Potency, 6
Untoward reactions, 7
Predictable reactions, 7
Unpredictable reactions, 8
Intolerance, 8
Idiosyncrasy, 8
Hypersensitivity, 8
Drug interactions, 8
Teratogenicity and carcinogenicity, 8
Time-action curve, 8
Factors, 8
Rate of absorption, 8
Extent of absorption, 9
Site of absorption, 9
Intermediary processes, 9
Anatomic barriers, 9
Elimination, 9
Therapeutic ratio, 10
Dosage, 10
Average dose, 11
Dosage schedule, 11
Potency as a basis of choice of drug, 11
Principles of drug evaluation, 12
Resolution of external forces, 12
Resolution of psychic forces and placebo effect, 12
Resolution of uncontrollable bias, 13
The double-blind and the all-blind, 13
Appropriate subjects, 14
Appropriate dosage, 14
Appropriate controls, 14
Sensitivity of method, 15
Collection of data, 15
Statistical significance, 16
Selecting the best drug for the patient, 18
Choice of a placebo, 19

which is preferable requires two kinds of pharmacologic information: (1) data obtained through studies in the laboratory and (2) data developed through studies in man, that is, its clinical pharmacology, a body of information on drugs more heard about now than ever before.

ESSENTIAL PHARMACOLOGIC INFORMATION

In the choice of a drug, the laboratory investigations that supply information and the proper interpretation of the data they provide are basic because knowledge about the actions of a drug, its potency, and its toxic effects gives the initial clues to its therapeutic potential and its dangers. Most of the important drugs in modern use have come by way of the research laboratory, for example, penicillin; only a handful, for example, digitalis, atropine, and morphine, have been inherited from ancient times, have survived the improvements and changes forged by the synthetic chemist, and are still to be found in today's pharmacopeias.

Bearing of experimental data on clinical utility of drugs

This is an appropriate place to make clear that there is no conflict between the data of the laboratory and the clinic. If properly selected, laboratory findings are more often directly applicable to the clinical situation than many clinicians admit. That a disparity should sometimes seem to exist generally arises through neglect of pertinent laboratory data or through their improper interpretation or application.

To judge whether a drug is useful in a specific clinical setting or, when there is more than one drug available, to decide

Chemists and drug manufacturers have an understandable tendency to make assumptions of drug utility in advance of the long period of experience essential to establish unquestionable clinical utility. The newspapers and television, too, along with unsettling stories, try to make news by disclosing unverified information on drugs that have a suggestive design or pharmacologic action and presenting them as panaceas.

Such publicity frequently is followed by public pressure on the medical profession to use insufficiently understood drugs. More often than otherwise, trials of drugs in man fail dismally to fulfill the hopeful predictions made or even remotely to satisfy the need for which, on the basis of superficially examined laboratory experiments, the drugs appeared to be suited. Too often such failures are interpreted as evidence of lack of compatibility between laboratory data and clinical application and as implying that the former are of limited utility in the evaluation of drugs for man. No matter how effective governmental and industrial controls and trials may be, it is the practicing physician who will still have to make choices of drugs on the basis of information somehow obtained. We hope that the principles of choice will not change because of legislation or F.D.A. fiat.

It is of the greatest importance to realize that it is the initial observation of the pharmacologic properties of new drugs in the laboratory animal that gives the clue to utility as well as makes possible their safe exploration in man. Thus the animal, the experiment, and in fact, the pharmacology laboratory are basic to progress in therapeutics. The difficulties with tranlycypromine (Parnate) could have been avoided by using information already developed in the laboratory; so, too, the MER/29 reactions would have been avoided if the early animal experiments had been fully reported. Truly important recent discoveries such as the modern treatment of gout, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia were direct results of animal experiments.

The pharmacologic properties of drugs as seen in the animal are likely to apply to man when laboratory experiments are carefully analyzed and applied only to those clinical situations that really correspond. Although species differences are sometimes striking, it is often possible to avoid disparity by the choice of the appropriate laboratory animal. When appropriate associations are regularly made, there will be far less time and effort lost in the futile trial of drugs that do not apply to the conditions for which they are tested. The well-designed laboratory investigation should provide precise information essential for determining the applicability of a drug to clinical problems, the physiologic functions altered by the drug, the nature of toxic reactions, and the likelihood of significant species differences in relation to drug tolerance as well as pharmacodynamic action. Such data also provide clues to possible serious drug interaction. Carcinogenic and teratogenic potentialities may defy the laboratory—often only long clinical experience tells the tale.

The nature and extent of the physiologic dysfunction in man to be rectified by therapy must be borne in mind and compared with the condition of the experimental animal in which the drug was tested, or a mismatch will inevitably result. Notable examples of such mismatches can be cited. Respiratory stimulation can be induced in the cat with several drugs, but it may not be automatically assumed that such drugs will stimulate respiration when it is depressed because of intoxication or disease. In fact, respiratory stimulants in clinical use usually do not induce the same degree of stimulation in the depressed respiratory center seen in the laboratory animal. That there should be clinical depression of respiration despite decreased oxygen and increased carbon dioxide content of the blood, both excellent stimulants of a reactive center, is strong evidence that the respiratory center is not only depressed but also resistant to stimulation. The reason why the respiratory analeptics now in use are disappointing is *not*

that the respiratory center of the normal cat is significantly different from that of man but rather that the normal respiratory center examined in the laboratory is in a *different reactive state* from that in clinical depression of respiration.

The pharmacologic actions of drugs can usually be trimmed down to very simple and precise terms since, fundamentally, drugs either stimulate or depress some physiologic function. Pharmacologic actions include toxic and undesirable as well as potentially useful effects. When drug actions seen in the animal are analyzed on such a basis, one can compare the experimental and clinical setting to decide whether there is sufficient similarity between them to hope for clinical utility. A drug that anesthetizes a normal cat is very likely to anesthetize a patient because the physiologic settings in both are similar, that is, before anesthesia is induced the central nervous system of the patient is usually as normal as that of the cat. The action of antidotes in the acutely poisoned animal is also likely to correspond with that in man because the type of action called for and the setting are much the same in both.

There are, of course, instances of disease or dysfunction in man for which there is no laboratory duplicate in which to test a drug. The psychotropic drugs may be cited as outstanding examples, but when clinical situations with their physiologic dysfunctions are carefully evaluated, comparable laboratory-induced states in animals are usually possible. Sometimes the association between laboratory and clinical states can be made out of piecemeal consideration of the disturbance in man. Where it is a fact that there is no laboratory counterpart, the deficiency on the part of the laboratory must be reckoned with, and in such a case it may be that only evaluation in the patient will provide basic as well as practical information on clinical utility.

Finally, there are the unanticipated spin-offs of the experiences with new drugs in man and unanticipated therapeutic uses (acetazolamide in glaucoma, chloroquin in psoriasis). Only experience

brings these out into the open. Such serendipity is fortunately not rare.

Nature of chemical relationships of drugs to clinical use

Our understanding of structure-activity relationships of many drugs has progressed to a point where the pharmacologist can often design a chemical structure and predict its pharmacologic action and toxic effects with amazing assurance. The genius of synthetic chemists is such that they ply the pharmacologist with new drugs with interesting and challenging actions. Their ability to make these new drugs threatens our present capacity for their careful clinical evaluation.

When new drugs are considered, knowledge of previously investigated congeners is important as a basis for speculation and prognostication. It is equally important to recall that new drugs may or may not have all the particularized actions of the mother substance or, in rare instances, may block one or more of these actions. In the transformation the drugs may have lost some facets of action or gained entirely new ones. It is important to recognize that some new drugs are therapeutically inferior to or more toxic than the old ones for which they are offered as a substitute. Alterations are not invariably improvements nor, for that matter, is a change in potency per se an accomplishment of much real clinical importance. Despite our highly developed talent for predicting the pharmacologic actions of freshly synthesized drugs, only examination in the animal and long trial in man tell the complete story.

The probable incidence of reactions caused by drug allergy, intolerance, idiosyncrasy, and drug interaction cannot be determined by preclinical investigation in animals or even in man. These are rare events that are identified and measured after a large and broad general clinical experience in man. Under our present system it usually takes 3 to 5 years of clinical use before the full potential for harm as well as the limits of utility are realized.