

## Yvonne Bowman-Boer, V'lain Fenton-May, Paul Le Brun (eds): Practical pharmaceuticals

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This comprehensive volume on practical pharmaceuticals is based on a Dutch book 'Recepteerkunde'. The compilation and translation of Practical Pharmaceuticals was financed by the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP), the Royal Dutch Association for the Advancement of Pharmacy (KNMP), and the Dutch Association of Hospital Pharmacists (NVZA).

Not all medicines that are mass produced by the pharmaceutical industry are suitable for all patients. Pharmacists must be able to tailor medication to the patients' need and this may involve making patient specific preparations.

Patients must receive essential medicines and pharmacists are responsible for this, not only in the developed and industrialised world, but also in developing countries where the supply chain is often unreliable.

With the increasing dependence of patients on pharmaceutical industry products, the art of preparing individualised medicines threatens to be lost and with the introduction of pharmacotherapy, clinical pharmacy and pharmaceutical care it would appear that other topics receive less emphasis in the curriculum.

The knowledge and skills of preparing medicines are still a definite requirement as are clear guidelines on the practice of preparations in a hospital or community pharmacy. Practical Pharmaceuticals provides basic knowledge for undergraduate or graduate pharmacy students and also practical knowledge on the design of medicines preparation.

Written by experienced pharmacists working in hospitals and academia throughout Europe, Practical Pharmaceuticals is

complete with practical examples and information on current European Union legislation.

This volume covers the four major domains of practical pharmaceuticals: Patient Needs, Product Design, Production and Dispensing. Quality aspects are covered in the sections on product design and production.

- Patient Needs deals primarily with the availability of medicines and requirements of quality prescriptions. It also clearly describes issues such as substitution and imports and the legislation.
- Product Design covers all the requirements for different types of products such as oral solids, oral liquids, suppositories, ear and eye preparations etc., and provides instructions for design and manufacture.
- Production deals with raw materials and excipients, containers, human resources, equipment, premises and other such topics. Pharmaceutical quality systems are also covered in this section.
- The final section on Dispensing provides detailed information about storage, distribution, usage instructions and environmental impact.

### Conclusion

The first (Patient Needs) and last sections (Dispensing) in this book seem the least developed and one might wonder if these sections are actually needed, since a number of other books (e.g. 'Remington') already give a lot of information on these aspects. The section on 'Dispensing' could well be merged together with 'Products'.

However, the two middle sections are really what make this book into a universal standard! No other work

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combines all this information on preparing medicines from so many different perspectives, nor includes quality and safety aspects on such a broad scale.

This book is an essential must-have for all medicine preparation and quality control laboratories. All

pharmacists should know it exists and what information it contains. It belongs on the shelf, next to the Martindale.