

Introduction to Toxicology

John Timbrell

THIRD EDITION



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DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACY,
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Contents

Preface to the First Edition		xi
Preface to the Third Edition		xii
CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	1
	Chapter outline	1
	Historical aspects	2
	Types of toxic substance	5
	Types of exposure	8
	Dose–response relationship	9
	Summary and learning objectives	15
	Questions	16
	Bibliography	17
CHAPTER 2	DISPOSITION OF TOXIC COMPOUNDS	19
	Chapter outline	19
	Absorption of toxic compounds	20
	Distribution of toxic compounds	27
	Excretion of toxic compounds	30
	Summary and learning objectives	34
	Questions	35
	Bibliography	37
CHAPTER 3	METABOLISM OF FOREIGN COMPOUNDS	39
	Chapter outline	39
	Introduction	39
	Factors affecting toxic responses	48
	Summary and learning objectives	52
	Questions	53
	Bibliography	54

CHAPTER 4	TYPES OF EXPOSURE AND RESPONSE	57
	Chapter outline	57
	Types of exposure	57
	Route of exposure	58
	Types of toxic response	58
	Biomarkers	67
	Summary and learning objectives	68
	Questions	70
	Bibliography	71
CHAPTER 5	DRUGS AS TOXIC SUBSTANCES	73
	Chapter outline	73
	Introduction	73
	Paracetamol	74
	Aspirin (salicylate)	75
	Hydralazine	78
	Halothane	80
	Debrisoquine	81
	Thalidomide	82
	Drug interactions	83
	Altered responsiveness: glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency	84
	Summary and learning objectives	85
	Questions	86
	Bibliography	86
CHAPTER 6	INDUSTRIAL TOXICOLOGY	89
	Chapter outline	89
	Industrial chemicals	89
	Means of exposure	90
	Toxic effects	90
	Vinyl chloride	91
	Cadmium	92
	Aromatic amines	93
	Asbestos	94
	Legislation	95

	Summary and learning objectives	96
	Questions	97
	Bibliography	98
CHAPTER 7	FOOD ADDITIVES AND CONTAMINANTS	99
	Chapter outline	99
	Introduction	99
	Tartrazine	101
	Saccharin	102
	Food contaminants	103
	Summary and learning objectives	106
	Questions	106
	Bibliography	107
CHAPTER 8	PESTICIDES	109
	Chapter outline	109
	Introduction	109
	DDT	111
	Organophosphorus compounds	114
	Paraquat	116
	Fluoroacetate	118
	Summary and learning objectives	118
	Questions	119
	Bibliography	119
CHAPTER 9	ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTANTS	121
	Chapter outline	121
	Introduction	121
	Air pollution	122
	Particulates	125
	Acid rain	125
	Lead pollution	128
	Water pollution	130
	Arsenic	131
	Food chains	132
	Endocrine disruptors	134
	Mercury and methylmercury	137

	Summary and learning objectives	140
	Questions	141
	Bibliography	142
CHAPTER 10	NATURAL PRODUCTS	143
	Chapter outline	143
	Plant toxins	144
	Animal toxins	146
	Fungal toxins	148
	Microbial toxins	148
	Summary and learning objectives	149
	Questions	150
	Bibliography	150
CHAPTER 11	HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS	151
	Chapter outline	151
	Introduction	151
	Carbon monoxide	152
	Antifreeze: ethylene glycol	154
	Cyanide	155
	Alcohol	156
	Glue sniffing and solvent abuse	157
	Antidotes and the treatment of poisoning	157
	Summary and learning objectives	159
	Questions	160
	Bibliography	161
CHAPTER 12	TOXICITY TESTING AND RISK ASSESSMENT	163
	Chapter outline	163
	Introduction	163
	Evaluation of toxicity	164
	Acute toxicity tests	167
	Sub-acute toxicity tests	168
	Chronic toxicity tests	169
	Testing <i>in vitro</i>	171
	Risk assessment and interpretation of toxicological data	173
	Conclusions	179

Summary and learning objectives	180
Questions	181
Bibliography	181
Answers to questions	183
Glossary	197
Index	207

Preface to the first edition

There is an ever increasing use of chemicals in modern society and, because of this, toxicology is becoming an increasingly important subject. Taught courses are now available in different countries at various levels to educate young toxicologists. Currently, however, there are no introductory texts that are reasonable inexpensive, and that serve as an introduction to the subject for students with backgrounds in various disciplines. Thus, there are hardback textbooks, such as *Cassarett and Doull's Toxicology*, for dedicated toxicologists and various specialist texts for particular aspects of toxicology. The smaller textbooks that are available are generally biased towards one particular aspect or interpretation of toxicology, such as the biochemical, pathological, pharmacological or pharmacokinetic aspects. However, most of these are either too expensive or too specialist for the novice toxicologist, the undergraduate or the postgraduate who simply wishes to become familiar with the subject as a whole.

Toxicology is a multidisciplinary subject, which has a large and diffuse literature and it is developing rapidly. Bringing this information together is difficult and time consuming for the student. Consequently there is a need for a cohesive text at the introductory rather than more advanced level. These deficiencies in the market became clear to me whilst being involved in teaching first a Masters course and then a Bachelors degree course in toxicology.

This book, therefore, has arisen from my awareness of the need for an introductory text for myself and for my own students and its content is largely based upon the information I have amassed in the preparation of lectures for these same students. I am indebted to these students for being the foil for this preparation and also to various colleagues for their helpful comments.

London, 1988

Preface to the third edition

As with many areas of biomedical science, the study of toxicology has been influenced by fundamental changes in biochemistry and molecular biology and now by the newly emerging sciences of genomics, proteomics and metabolomics. These are having a major impact on the study and potentially an understanding of the interactions of chemicals with living systems. Also new areas and types of interaction have emerged since the second edition of this book. Some of these, such as interactions with the peroxisome proliferator activated receptor, are now mentioned in this new edition. However, this book is primarily concerned with the basic underlying principles of toxicology at the introductory level and these remain largely unchanged. Therefore the *format* of the previous editions has been retained with specific examples used to illustrate these basic principles.

The major changes have been updating the existing text in relation to new knowledge or nomenclature and the inclusions of new examples. Thus there is now a much enlarged section on risk assessment and new sections on *in vitro* toxicology, on endocrine disrupters and on the treatment of poisoning, for example. A number of specific case studies for particular chemicals or toxins have also been included.

This third edition now has chapter outlines and summaries and questions with answers, as teaching aids. For those requiring more extensive and detailed information there are a number of excellent reference texts which are listed in the bibliography at the end of each chapter.

The number of chemicals used in society will inevitably increase and consequently so will the risk of chemical exposure, even though the use and manufacture of chemicals may now be better regulated. Thus despite the recent regrettable closure, contraction or realignment of research institutions and courses specifically orientated towards toxicology in the UK, the subject of toxicology is no less important to our society. Therefore, scientists with a broad overview of toxicology will always be required as well as more specialized scientists such as molecular biologists. I hope that this book will help in that endeavour by stimulating an interest in toxicology.

As with previous editions, this third edition has benefited from my teaching activities at different levels and in many different places and countries for which I am grateful.

Finally, special thanks to Cathy for her specific help and support.

London, April 2001