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DRUGS
FOR THE
HEART

8TH EDITION

DRUGS FOR THE HEART

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Foreword

Cardiovascular disease is destined to become an even more important cause of morbidity and mortality as the population of the so-called developed world ages and the epidemic of ischemic heart disease in more affluent and more obese persons in the developing world sets in. Fortunately, an ever-growing array of drugs that act on the cardiovascular system continues to become available. These agents are more efficacious and better tolerated than their predecessors, not only in the management of established disease but also increasingly in prevention. However, both trainees and practitioners of medicine and cardiology have ever-increasing difficulty in deciding how to choose the proper therapies for their patients. The eighth edition of Professors Opie's and Gersh's important book provides a rational approach to help with these important decisions. *Drugs for the Heart* is a concise yet complete presentation of cardiac pharmacology and therapeutics. It presents, in a very readable and eminently understandable fashion, an extraordinary amount of important information on the effects of drugs on the heart and circulation. The editors and the talented authors they have enlisted have the unique ability to explain, in a straightforward manner and without oversimplification, the mechanism of action of drugs. This book also summarizes the results of important clinical trials that have shaped regulatory approval and practice guidelines. Finally, it provides important practical information for the clinician.

The eighth edition of this now well-established and admired book builds on the strengths of its predecessors. The excellent explanatory diagrams (an Opie trademark) are even better and more numerous than in previous editions, while the text and references in this rapidly moving field are as fresh as this week's journals. For example, since the publication of the seventh edition the care of patients with many cardiovascular disorders has advanced considerably, and to describe the new landscape the editors have added several distinguished clinical scientists to their author list. These include John R. Teerlink and Karen Sliwa (heart failure), Henry Krum and Ronald G. Victor (antihypertensive therapies), Stanley Nattel (antiarrhythmic drugs), Harvey White (antithrombotic and antiplatelet agents), as well as Juris Meier (metabolic syndrome and diabetes). When these new authors are added to the experts continuing from the earlier edition, this makes a truly outstanding global team.

I strongly recommend this concise volume, which will be of enormous value and interest to all clinicians—specialists and generalists, as well as trainees at all levels, teachers and scientists—who wish to gain a clear understanding of contemporary cardiovascular pharmacology and apply this information most effectively to the care of patients with cardiovascular disease.

Eugene Braunwald, MD

Distinguished Hersey Professor of Medicine

Harvard Medical School

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(An editorial from The Lancet, March 29, 1980, to introduce a series of articles on Drugs and the Heart.)*

Cardiovascular times are changing. After a mere ten years' repose the medical Rip van Winkle would be thoroughly bewildered. For instance, there has been a big switch in attitudes to the failing heart. Experience with beta-blockers has shown the fundamental importance of sympathetic activity in regulating cardiac contraction, and this activity can now be adjusted readily in either direction. Likewise, from calcium antagonists much has been discovered about the function of this ion at the cellular level and its importance in the generation of necrosis and cardiac arrhythmia. Continuous ambulatory electrocardiography and special electrophysiological techniques have eased the assessment of arrhythmias, and, again, of drugs to stop or prevent them. Many new drugs have come on the scene, and they have been increasingly devised to act at specific points on pathways to cellular metabolism.

Dr. van Winkle apart, there may be one or two other physicians who regard the new flood of Cardioactive drugs with alarm. For doctors such as these, Professor Lionel Opie has written the series of articles which begin on the next page. As Professor Opie remarks, drugs should be given, not because they *ought* to work, but because they *do* work. We hope that this series will help stimulate the critical approach to cardiovascular pharmacology that will be much needed in the coming decade.

*(Kim Eagle is the Albion Walter Hewlett Professor of Internal Medicine and Director of the Cardiovascular Center at the University of Michigan Health System; keagle@med.umich.edu.)

Review of *Drugs for the Heart*, 7th Edition, *Lancet*, 2009, 374:518.

Packed with useful information, this book is infinitely navigable in 12 lucid and straightforward chapters. Everything you need to know about drugs for the heart is here.

I know that the book is also available online—no doubt my residents and students will be delighted with that version—but I like the paper version.

The book has the clearest figures and tables that I have ever seen.

Most importantly, the section editors don't just opine on how one might go about treating cardiovascular conditions with drugs, *they tell you how to do it*. Those of us who take care of patients like to know how experts do it. Opie and Gersh, and their troupe of contributors, are all experts. They talk from both a science viewpoint and experience.

This book is great on dosing, side-effect profiles, drug interactions, and how to use the agents in care.

Preface

“What is the use of a book,’ thought Alice, ‘without pictures?”

—Lewis Carroll (1832-1898), *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

“Encouraged by the public reception of the former editions, the author has spared neither labour nor expense, to render this as perfect as his opportunities and abilities would permit. The progress of knowledge is so rapid, and the discoveries so numerous, both at home and abroad, that this may rather be regarded as a new work than as a re-publication of an old one.

On this account, a short enumeration of the more important changes may possibly be expected by the reader.”

—William Withering, “Discoverer of the Medical Uses of Digitalis.”
In *Botany*, 3rd edition, 1801.

Taking the profound advice of these two early authors, changes for this eighth edition are the following:

1. To stay current, rapid access to new information and new references is mandatory. **We anticipate an increasing online use of this book, which will be relatively easy.** In addition, as shown on the cover, this edition is now available online on Expert Consult. The website contains our regular updates on the important new drug trials. References in the online version of the book can now be accessed by a simple click that will link the reader to the article abstract in PubMed, and then to the original article. Please refer to the inside front cover on how to register using your unique PIN code.
2. These steps promote our aim of providing a readily accessible guide to cardiovascular drugs in a unique style and format. This compact book, again in the widely acclaimed **unique format**, gives crucial information in an easily accessible format for residents, cardiology fellows, and senior students (and, of course, consultants). We believe that this new edition will be more in demand than ever as it will be kept even more current than the previous editions.
3. Many of the illustrations are either new or newly re-created with the aim of conveying maximum clarity, in keeping with the increasingly visual times in which we live. **In the *Lancet*, Kim Eagle stated that the book has the clearest figures that he has ever seen.** We owe our sincerest gratitude to Jeannie Walker for her artistic genius, skills, and patience.

**Lionel H. Opie
Bernard J. Gersh**

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