# Book Review

## Color Atlas of Pharmacology

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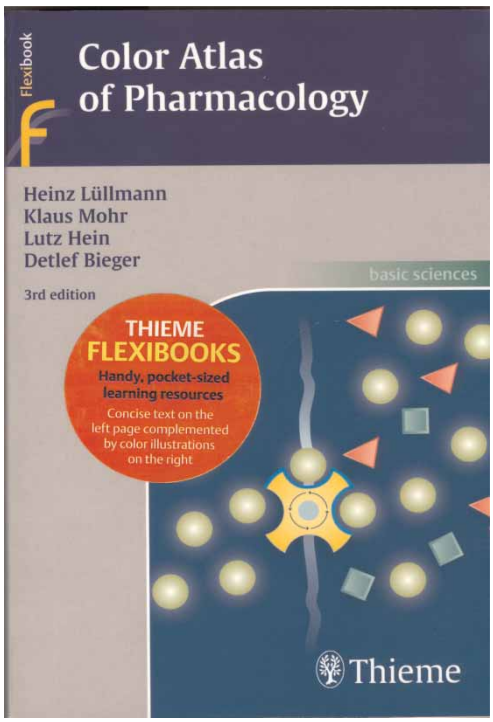
Georg Thieme Verlag, Stuttgart, Germany; 2005; ISBN 3-13-781703-X; 402 pp.; Hardback; £45.00




The *Color Atlas of Pharmacology* presents a comprehensive overview of the main topics of pharmacology. The Atlas is divided into three parts. The first part addresses general pharmacology and includes important issues relating to the history of pharmacology, and drug sources and development. Surprisingly, despite the compact nature of the Atlas, sufficient information is included about methods of drug administration, drug distribution and elimination. Critical parameters used to define drug pharmacokinetics, along with an outline of the tools that are useful in the quantitation of a drug's action, are also included. In addition, issues related to receptors that define drug–receptor interactions, such as models of molecular mechanisms of agonist/antagonist action, are presented. The Atlas also approaches an emerging discipline in modern pharmacology — pharmacogenetics. Several paradigms are presented in order to introduce the reader to the importance of the inter-individual variability in the expression of critical drug-metabolising enzyme systems that determine the fate of a drug in the body. It becomes apparent that polymorphism is a crucial factor in the effectiveness of drug therapy.

The section on systems pharmacology focuses on the main categories of drugs used to treat diseases related to a particular system, such as the cardiovascular system, respiratory system, etc. Each chapter begins with an introduction to the physiology of the system, which is useful for understanding drug actions and efficacy. Accordingly, information related to the mechanisms of drug action is also provided, including receptor-linked signalling pathways and receptor selectivity. Throughout the Atlas, pictures, descriptive schemes and diagrams provide information about the chemical structure of a drug, the source of a drug (wherever possible), the type of receptors that the drug binds to and the mechanism of the drug's action. Overall, these are very supportive to the text, providing at a glance the most important information for the main categories of drugs.

The third section of the Atlas provides information and guidelines for the therapy of selected disease categories, including hypertension, hypotension, angina pectoris, congestive heart failure, gout, obesity, osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis, migraine, the common cold, allergies, bronchial asthma, emesis, alcohol abuse and glaucoma. The main causative factors of these diseases are outlined and the reader is introduced to the best applied therapeutic approaches. Related benefits and adverse effects of the suggested drugs are also discussed. At the end, the Atlas also provides very useful references for further reading.

Overall, I consider that the *Color Atlas of Pharmacology*, with its concise text, supported by a plethora of beautiful and descriptive schemes and diagrams, provides the basic framework for the understanding of critical issues related to drug development and therapy. In addition, it enables doctoral or undergraduate students — or even physicians and pharmacists — to obtain, at a glance, all the essential information about the therapeutic value of a drug.

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