

BOOKS

Comprehensive guide on preregistration interview

'The pre-registration interview', by Nadia Bukhari. Pp160. Price £15.95. London: Pharmaceutical Press; 2007. ISBN 978 0 85369 698 8

Gone are the days when securing a preregistration placement was a relatively trivial affair. Pharmacy has now acquired the competitive graduate atmosphere characteristic of other professions. Securing a preregistration placement is a stressful and decisive period for pharmacy students, more so now due to the advent of new schools and increased competition for placements provided by the community, hospital and industry sectors.

Students are now expected to work in their summers, have varied experiences, be aware of issues existing within the profession, and be able to sell themselves as outstanding candidates. For students who cannot meet these expectations, securing a placement of choice is almost an impossible task.

'The pre-registration interview' by Nadia Bukhari sets out to provide a comprehensive guide to the "dos" and "do nots" for securing a dream placement. It contains information on everything: summer placements, the pre-registration application process, writing a good curriculum vitae and covering letter, and filling out preregistration applications. All aspects are helpfully illustrated with "good" and "bad" examples from students and clearly annotated diagrams. Importantly, the author has interviewed recruiters from all sectors and asked them to explain what they are looking for in prospective employees. The book continues with how to prepare for the interview and what to do on the big day to outshine the competition. Finally, a large section of the book is devoted to the "question bank". This is a list of questions which have been gathered from past preregistration interviews and collated into one long, invaluable list.

The counter-productive nature of the book should be pointed out. Having been intended to help students out, it has also managed to reveal some key secrets to success — students may well be more on a par with each other as a result. Employers will surely need to step up their game. But if Ms Bukhari teaches you anything in this book, it is to be unique and be yourself.

This book is a definite must and a good investment for the future. Co-ordinators of the MPharm course would certainly not go amiss incorporating it into their reading lists.

Leila Taheri

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Reference source offering practitioners key principles in pharmacokinetics

Clinical pharmacokinetics, 4th edition, edited by John E. Murphy. Pp xxxix+463. Price \$50. Bethesda: American Society of Health-System Pharmacists; 2008. ISBN 978 1 58528 167 1

This book is intended for use as a reference source offering practitioners the key principles in pharmacokinetics and the application of these principles in drug therapy.

It is largely designed to help predict doses needed to achieve target drug concentrations or predict drug concentrations from doses administered to patients. It offers information for medicines that require an understanding of individual patients' probable or actual drug concentrations to achieve medication effectiveness and safety.

This expanded fourth edition incorporates a list of commonly used pharmacokinetic equations and looks at dosing requirements for neonatal, paediatric and geriatric patients in addition to overweight and obese patients. It also has a new chapter on creatinine clearance estimation, tables on international and traditional units for drug and laboratory tests, and specific chapters on anti-infective agents, neurological agents, cardiovascular drugs and anticoagulants. At last, in this fourth edition, standard international units finally appear in the tables, with conversion factors to convert from traditional units. The editor believes that this should allow easier use of the book around the world.

General pharmacokinetic principles are discussed in the introductory chapter including the reasons why some drug concentration measurements fall outside the expected range of population estimates. This chapter also includes a glossary of pharmacokinetic terms, selected pharmacokinetic symbols and a series of pharmacokinetic equations.

A chapter on creatinine clearance estimations has been added to this edition largely because many dose predictions depend on creatinine clearance rather than body weight. A good example is how to predict a dose when a patient has had a limb amputated.

The main chapters, 24 in total, are devoted to those drugs that require careful monitoring such as the aminoglycosides, the newer antiepileptics (felbamate, gabapentin, lamotrigine, tiagabine, topiramate, levetiracetam, oxcarbazepine), antirejection agents, carbamazepine, antidepressants, digoxin, heparin, warfarin and others.

Typically, each chapter includes the usual dose range, the bioavailability of dosage forms, general pharmacokinetic information (absorption, distribution, elimination, metabolism, protein binding), clearance, volume of distribution, half-life and time to steady state, therapeutic range, dosing strategies, sampling times, pharmacodynamic monitoring, drug-drug interactions, pharmacodynamic interactions, drug-disease interactions and references.

The final three chapters deal with drug dosing in paediatric patients, therapeutic drug monitoring in the geriatric patient and dosing concepts in renal dysfunction.

Authors of the chapters are from a broad range of pharmacy practice: clinical practice, academia and medical departments of pharmaceutical companies.

One of the outstanding features of the book is the large number of references cited at the end of each chapter. For example, the chapter on phenytoin and fosphenytoin has 109 references.

This book shows practitioners and students how to apply pharmacokinetic principles to drug therapy in day-to-day practice. It is a useful addition to any pharmacy reference library.

Laurence A. Goldberg

Useful book for all practitioners who provide pharmaceutical care to older people

Geriatric pharmacotherapy: a guide for helping the professional, by C. Olsen, W. Tindall and M. Clasen. Pp324. Price \$89. Atlanta: American Pharmacists Association; 2007. ISBN 978 1582120720

This book, produced by the American Pharmacists Association, introduces and discusses the key areas of pharmaceutical care for older people. The advantage of this publication is that it not only covers clinical areas specific to this population but also discusses prescribing principles and improving use of medicines.

Useful features include the use of case studies to aid understanding of the topic, and the use of the acronym HELPING that can be used during an assessment of medication needs.

The book is useful for all practitioners who provide pharmaceutical care to older people but will prove most beneficial to those who are new to this area and students. However, caution is needed since it is primarily designed for American healthcare professionals and therefore should be used in conjunction with established UK texts and guidelines.

Chapters include medication needs of the ambulatory elderly, enhancing medication adherence, altered pharmacokinetics in an elderly population, pharmacotherapy issues relating to cardiovascular disease, managing diabetes mellitus and thyroid disease, common infections in the community, issues in dermatology, dealing with the dread of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, diagnosis and treatment of depression, pharmacotherapy issues of managing chronic pain, nutrition and exercise, natural medicines used by the elderly, ethical prescribing and improving medicines use.

Jeremy Robson