

Chemotherapy with antibiotics and allied drugs

National Health and Medical Research Council

Fourth edition

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Preface

The origin of this book was 'Notes on Sulphonamides' written by Jean C. Tolhurst, a typescript circulated in Alfred Hospital Medical School in 1952.

Shortly thereafter the Dean, Dr Ewen Downie, asked Miss Tolhurst to revise the manuscript and to extend it to include the antibiotics. For that purpose she recruited the present editors. We could have said then who wrote the first draft of each chapter or section, but we had always been uninhibited critics of each other's writing and the result was truly a composite work.

The manuscript was shown to a number of our colleagues for criticism. One of them, Dr Edgar Thomson, brought it to the attention of **the National Health and Medical Research Council, who published it in 1955 for free distribution to medical, dental and veterinary students and practitioners, throughout Australia.** Later, it was reprinted.

In 1963, the NH&MRC published a second edition. Prior to that, Jean had become an invalid, but during the preparation of that edition she was warded on an upper floor of this same building, where she read and soundly criticised each draft and amended manuscript. That edition was probably our best, for it covered adequately the state of knowledge at the time and did so with brevity and clarity.

In 1966 Dr Tolhurst died suddenly. In the preceding years her condition had improved slightly and she had been able to get about via taxi and wheelchair, until the last few weeks. We had been asked to prepare a third edition, for the book was out of print, but other tasks had engrossed us. Several years passed before serious work began and it was 1973 before the third edition was published.

There was much more information to be imparted and we found that as critics we lacked Jean's ability to eliminate verbosity.

The third edition was supplied only to students, but was given to medical practitioners within Australia who wrote to ask for it. Almost all requests from overseas were refused, mainly because stocks were soon depleted, but partly because the NH&MRC has no obligation to people outside the country and is specifically debarred from recovering the expenses incurred.

The present edition is published by the Australian Government Publishing Service on terms such that the NH&MRC can be supplied with its needs and the remaining copies may be sold. Surely there cannot be many books which go through three editions and 60 000 copies before they reach the general public.

We have always had contributors other than the three whose names appeared on the title-page of earlier editions. To them we owe thanks; especially to the three, Eric Clarke, John Forbes and Arthur Hill, who have been with us from the beginning. In the present edition we have consciously sought more, many more. There are again new antibiotics to describe, we are more conscious both of the occasional exotic disease that is imported, and of some infections and infestations that we had overlooked, and we thought we two could

no longer cope either in respect of time or of expertise. Therefore we have recruited a wide circle of friends and some whom, at the time, we knew only by reputation. They have responded nobly.

The unsigned pieces are further revisions, in most cases, of the originals by Tolhurst, Buckle and Williams.

The two survivors of that trio now regard themselves as editors. They trust that the book will go on to further editions and assume that authors and editors will change with time.

We owe particular gratitude to Mrs E. Meldrum, who verified the references and arranged them according to the Harvard system. Any defects in them are due to G.B's over-confidence.

Mrs Ian Atkyns showed devotion far beyond the call of duty in producing the final manuscript from blotted and crumpled papers overwritten with successive emendations, even continuing after her retirement, and her husband kindly assisted in their decipherment and transcription. We thank them sincerely.

Finally we thank officers of the Department of Health and of the Secretariat of the NH&MRC for smoothing our way.