

Preface

In recent years there have been a number of significant developments of natural products for the treatment of rheumatic diseases, pain and gastro-intestinal ulcers and inflammation. It is proposed to cover chapters on some of these novel developments of natural products which are of current and future interest as therapies for the above-mentioned conditions.

The current volume could be considered to be a follow-on from the last two PDR volumes on “Natural Compounds as Drugs”, Volumes I and II (Frank Petersen and Rene Amstutz, editors, 2008). These volumes covered a wide range of biological and technological aspects of natural products and their discovery, some involving synthesis and properties of chemical compounds. The difference in this volume is that the natural products have a focus of their therapeutic effects on pain, arthritic and gastro-intestinal diseases.

Some of the natural products covered in the current volume can be considered novel with respect to their anti-inflammatory, gastro-intestinal and anti-microbial activities. They are either at the experimental stage of development while some others are well-established clinical used products. Each has its own unique place in therapy.

This volume has mostly arisen from on long-standing research interests and scientific contacts by the editors. To some extent the link between anti-inflammatory and gastro-intestinal diseases is part of an evolving trend. Issues concerning the fact that many anti-inflammatory agents exhibit gastro-intestinal (GI) adverse reactions as part of their pharmacological actions is considered as a basis for developing new agents that are either devoid of the GI effects or that the gut microbes may be therapeutically manipulated to influence some of the systemic manifestations of inflammatory diseases. Traditional or plant sources continue to serve not only as valuable sources of therapies or as basic leads for developing specific anti-inflammatory therapeutics with lesser GI effects than seen with conventional drugs.

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