

Preface

It is commonly acknowledged that, to a pharmacologist, the finding of a clear relationship between an effect and the dose or concentration of the agent that elicits it is a sure indication that he or she is on solid ground. In clinical pharmacology, obtaining this type of relationship is, indeed, a true achievement. On the one hand, it is a definite contribution to the discipline, as it offers valid information on the effects of drugs in man and, on the other, provides a tool for understanding the true magnitude of these effects and for making educated guesses about what is to be expected of doses not directly tested. A century ago, Lord Kelvin suggested that only information that could be quantitated should be considered scientifically sound, but time has shown that this guidance conveyed a risk: that whatever is expressed in numbers would automatically be credible or considered of interest. Clinical pharmacology still suffers from a scarcity of reliable quantitative data about the effects of drugs in man, among an abundance of contributions full of numerical values of doubtful clinical consequence. With this in mind, it was a challenge and a pleasure to explore the possibilities of and limitations in obtaining clear dose-response relationships for pharmacological and toxicological effects in man. From the presentations and discussions in this symposium, it is obvious that much can be accomplished.

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