highlights prevention strategies related to prescribing, dispensing, and labelling, as well as the patient’s role in preventing or reducing medication errors. Part IV discusses medication errors related to specific disease conditions, such as chemotherapy, pediatric drug therapy, and immunological products. Part V reviews medication error reporting systems and the roles of risk management and risk analysis.

There is minimal information relating to medication errors in ambulatory care settings. However, many of the principles concerning how errors occur, the associated human error factors, and the strategies for implementing system improvements to prevent errors and thereby maximize patient safety, as raised in this book, are also applicable to ambulatory settings.

The availability of this book is both timely and significant for hospital pharmacy. At a time when many health-care professionals, including pharmacists, nurses, and physicians, are showing growing interest in patient safety issues, this book will not only be an excellent source of information, but will also provide a road map for improving safe medication practices in various health-care settings.

To summarize, I consider Medication Errors a “must” textbook reference for both health-care management and professional staff who are providing patient care. I would also strongly recommend this book as a reference for senior management and risk management personnel in hospitals and other institutional facilities. To effect culture change and to foster a commitment to embark on the mission of reducing medication errors, the impetus has to come from all levels.

David U, BScPhm, MScPhm
Pharmacy Manager
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Queen Street Site
Toronto, Ontario

Allen’s Compounded Formulations.
Softcover, 142 pages. Nonmember price US$49.00.

Pharmaceutical compounding today is most often practiced in direct response to the specific requirements of a patient whose needs are not met by ready-made products. Any pharmacist who is regularly faced with the task of compounding new and exotic patient-specific medication, whether in a hospital or a community setting, will benefit from the tips and ideas expressed in this publication.

The volume contains a collection of compounding formulations and columns published in the U.S. Pharmacist from 1995 to 1998. The formulations, 47 in total, are arranged according to disease state and medical indication but are also cross-indexed according to dosage form. These formulations cover a full spectrum of dosage forms, some very creative and innovative, mostly nonsterile, meant for oral use and topical application. Included are capsules, gels, inhalation products, lozenges and troches, nasal preparations, ointments, creams, pastes, powders, solutions, sticks, suppositories, and suspensions.

The entry for each formulation includes method of preparation, use, packaging, labelling, stability information, and references. The author has also included an extensive discussion alongside each entry, where he explains the rationale for the formulation and describes additional preparation and administration techniques.

Some formulations can serve as templates or starting points for preparing one-of-a-kind dosage forms. Experience gained when preparing etodolac suppositories, for instance, could readily be applied to the compounding of other suppository products.

The author has recently published a comprehensive textbook, The Art, Science, and Technology of Pharmaceutical Compounding [reviewed in the October 2000 issue of CJHP (2000;53:276,280)]. Therefore, this collection of 47 formulations is not meant to provide a thorough discussion of theory and basics. It is limited in scope and does not have a useful or detailed index for quick reference.

The busy hospital or community pharmacist searching for answers and easy solutions to his or her compounding dilemmas will not find this collection particularly useful. However, the volume makes for interesting and informative reading, and it could inspire pharmacy practitioners to experiment and to expand the services they provide to their patients.

Chrys Kolos, BScPhm
Supervisor — Pharmacy Manufacturing and Prepackaging
Sunnybrook and Women’s Health Sciences Centre
Toronto, Ontario