NEW CONCEPTS IN DEPRESSION

Pierre Fabre Monograph Series

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PIERRE FABRE MONOGRAPH SERIES

VOLUME 2

NEW CONCEPTS IN DEPRESSION

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Preface to the series

Created in 1961, the Pierre Fabre Group is one of Europe's youngest research-based ethical pharmaceutical and beauty-care groups. From its base in Castres in south-west France, the group has expanded in the last 27 years to become one of the major privately owned French companies in its field.

The Pierre Fabre Research Centre, which has existed in its present form for about 10 years, had adopted a basic strategy of encouraging collaboration between its own research centre in Castres and academic research scientists throughout the world. The creation of the Pierre Fabre Monograph Series is a further development of this strategy. Certain monographs in this series will be based on international symposia organised or sponsored by the Pierre Fabre Research Centre. Others will group together chapters from acknowledged international experts and dynamic young scientists destined to become tomorrow's experts. In all cases, the subjects of these monographs will be those presenting a major challenge to therapeutic medicine.

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Preface

The pharmacotherapy of depression has advanced in irregular steps since the first introduction of monoamine oxidase inhibitors and tricyclic antidepressants in the 1950s. The latest surge has come from the series of new selective antidepressants which have been recently introduced or are in the final stages of development. Since our fundamental understanding of a disease is often limited by the availability of specific drugs, it is not surprising that there has also been a recent acceleration in fundamental research in depression. The discovery of new receptor subtypes, neurotransmitter and cotransmitter interregulations and a deeper understanding of adaptive processes in pharmacology have also opened new horizons.

This second volume in the Pierre Fabre Monograph Series brings together chapters describing these new events and especially the new concepts that are emerging. The underlying themes of interaction, regulation and adaptive responses of the major neurotransmitter systems, especially serotonin and nor-adrenaline, are found in many of the chapters and are at the basis of a new consensus. This consensus of opinion may not lead immediately to new antidepressant therapies, but, by concentrating basic research effort in new promising areas, it should lead to a new major therapeutic advances in the not-too-distant future.

The symposium on which this book is based took place in Castres in South-West France in March 1987. It was sponsored by the Pierre Fabre Research Centre with generous contributions from the Conseil Général de Midi-Pyrénées, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and the Macmillan Press.

We would like to thank everyone from the Pierre Fabre Research Centre who helped with this symposium, especially the members of the Biochemical Pharmacology Department who undertook the local organisation. Special thanks are due to the symposium secretary, Martine Dehaye, who so charmingly and efficiently organised the secretarial affairs of the symposium and of this book. Our thanks

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Castres and Paris, 1987

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