

Levy RH, Penry JK. *Idiosyncratic Reactions to Valproate. Clinical Risk Patterns and Mechanisms of Toxicity*, Raven Press, New York, 1991.

Based on a workshop in San Diego in August 1990, Levy and Penry have edited a series of review articles and original studies concerning liver injury induced by the anticonvulsant drug valproic acid. Although mechanism and frequency are still not precisely known, the book gives a comprehensive insight in the current knowledge of the complex and intriguing field of Reye syndrome-like diseases of childhood and a variety of metabolic disturbances to which valproate-associated hepatic failure is related. Several risk factors have been identified, including a young age of less than 2 years, the concomitant use of other anticonvulsant drugs and indications for the possible existence of metabolic disturbances such as medium-chain acyl coenzyme-A deficiency, urea cycle disorders, organic acidemia, carnitine or free radical scavenger deficiencies and mitochondrial or degenerative underlying diseases. Other possible adverse reactions to valproic acid are not discussed.

The book is a helpful source of – scientific and practical – information to pediatricians, neurologists, pharmacists and others responsible for the care of patients receiving or needing valproic acid.

*R.H.B. Meyboom, MD
Leiden, Netherlands*