ABSTRACT

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Since the introduction of the first antiviral drug, a great progress has been made. Every year, many substances are tested for their activity against a wide range of viruses. Especially for serious diseases, like AIDS and hepatitis C, the need for safer and more effective drugs is increased.

In the first part of the thesis older, but still important drugs are described and also their structures are given. Some of them have a wide spectrum of activity, such as ribavirin, which is used for the treatment of both hepatitis C and viral hemorrhagic fever.

In the second part, newly developed drugs and drugs that are under clinical trials are discussed. New drugs have greater efficacy and fewer side effects. Nevertheless, there are some viral diseases that could not be managed with drugs and must be prevented by vaccines. To overcome all difficulties and develop both new drugs and vaccines remains a great challenge for the scientists.