

October 1989. Seventy papers were presented at this meeting, the overwhelming majority (80%) being given by Japanese speakers.

For those of us who were unable to attend the meeting, this book gives an interesting insight into areas in nucleic acid chemistry which are of interest to our Japanese colleagues. A number of the papers are concerned with oligonucleotide synthesis including some on 'RNA enzymes'. There are also papers on the synthesis of nucleoside analogues and nucleopeptides. The cleavage of DNA by antibiotics and the molecular structure of oligo- and polynucleotides are covered and there are one or two papers on the use of enzymes in the synthesis of nucleosides. There is also an intriguing paper on the effect of pressure on plant endonuclease reactions. Apparently, hydrolytic reactions catalysed by nuclease P1 are slowed by the application of pressure but those catalysed by potato nuclease are not.

All the papers are only two pages or less in length and are

presumably unrefereed. I found the brevity of the papers frustrating, particularly in view of the small format of the pages (approx. A5). It would have been better for the average reader if the organiser had been able to persuade authors to expand their papers a little and aim at four rather than two pages maximum. However, despite the shortness of the individual papers, I found that this was an excellent book for browsing and the generation of new research ideas.

IRL Press are to be congratulated in publishing this book so quickly after the meeting. Many of the communications are previews of papers to come and it is essential that a comparatively ephemeral book such as this is produced before the full papers. The papers are clear and are well presented. I suspect very few individuals will buy this book although it is certainly to be recommended for library purchase. The price is not excessive for a book of this kind.

D.W. Hutchinson

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**Hormones and Their Actions, Part II; Edited by B.A. Cooke, R.J.B. King and H.J. van der Molen; Elsevier; Amsterdam, 1988; xv + 366 pages; \$123.75; Dfl.235.00**

The 16 chapters of this book are reviews of the specific actions of protein hormones written by experts on their subject from universities in North America and Europe. Consistent with the style of its companion volume (Part I) the emphasis is to outline the experimental evidence upon which the discussion of mechanisms is based, rather than make unsubstantiated assertions. That approach is useful for established researchers revising their knowledge, and essential for undergraduate and research students really getting to grips with the subject for the first time.

The various components of transmembrane signalling systems are comprehensively reviewed in the first four chapters which prepare the way for the rest of the book to deal with protein hormones individually. Pituitary hormone releasing and inhibiting factors lead into discussions of events at pituitary hormone target tissues. Glucagon, angiotensin II and insulin are also major topics, but despite its established and growing significance in endocrine biology the gastrointestinal system of hormones is not reviewed.

Much of the experimental evidence for our present understanding of the complex machinery of hormone action is derived from the well established methods of physiology, pharmacology and biochemistry to which the more recently developed techniques of molecular biology are being applied. The subject will fascinate anyone with an interest in the molecular basis of biological activity. The wealth of new information inevitably raises more questions. Just how many different G proteins exist, precisely how is calcium mobilised and how legitimate is the discussion of physiological events when the data is obtained from tumour cell lines, will doubtless be topics for future reviews.

Apart from minor inconsistencies such as the use by some authors of the old amino acid designations rather than the single letter notation, the only criticism of the presentation of this highly readable and useful book are the figures, some of which are too small and finely drawn for the information they contain.

K. Burdett

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**Cytokines Regulating the Allergic Response; Edited by C. Sorg; Karger; Basel, 1989; viii + 106 pages; SFr 95.00, £39.60**

This is the second volume in the series 'Cytokines', the first being entitled 'Macrophage-Derived Cell Regulatory Factors'. Here, in six chapters, invited specialists in the field review the latest knowledge on cytokines involved in immediate-type hypersensitivity reactions and other types of allergic inflammatory reactions. Contemporary understanding of the pathogenesis of allergic diseases assigns a pivotal role to IgE and emphasis is therefore given to studies of the regulation of IgE synthesis and to experimental approaches

which seek to manipulate the IgE response. Cytokines play a fundamental role in regulation of the cells involved in allergic reactions as well as interacting with the essential mediators of the inflammatory response and this is also reflected in the editor's choice of topics. The first chapter reviews the field of experimental induction of suppressor T cells in antibody responses to protein antigens in mice and describes attempts by the authors to apply similar strategies to generate suppressor cells or suppressor factors to IgE responses to