

allergen. The second chapter is a summary of the evidence for an essential role for interleukin 4 in the generation of IgE responses as well as in the induction of FcE receptor II on cells mediating hypersensitivity. The third chapter presents evidence for a role for cytokines in regulating IgE synthesis via anti-IgE antibody production. Clinical evidence, much of it empirical, is cited to support the concept of immunopathology caused by selective cytokine imbalance in atopy and of a role for anti-IgE antibodies in the physiology of the IgE response. Chapter 4 is an excellent review of the role of platelet activating factor (PAF) in inflammation; it describes its actions, its interactions with other cytokines and various cell types, and the biological consequences of its activity in inflammation. The penultimate chapter is a clear account of the effects of interleukins 3 and 4 on mast cell

development in the mouse; it describes the biology and life-span of mast cells and the responsiveness of these cells and cell lines derived from them to IL3 and IL4. The final chapter describes the regulation of human basophil/mast cell activation by cytokines.

For the specialist researcher in the field, this volume should provide a useful up-date of an extremely fast moving research area. It is written with sufficient clarity for immunologists not working directly in allergy to understand easily and it is the latter group which is likely to benefit most from this volume. The research described is almost exclusively fundamental, a fact completely appropriate to the state of knowledge in the field, but this makes it unlikely that the volume will be very useful to the practising clinician.

Patricia M. Chisholm

Cytokines in Cancer Therapy; By Frances Balkwill; Oxford University Press; Oxford, 1989; xvi + 297 pages; £30.00 (hardback), £18.50 (paperback)

Dr Balkwill is one of the authorities in the U.K. in the field of cytokines and she is greatly interested in making this fast moving field more accessible to a wider audience. Thus she has been the prime mover in founding the 'British Cytokine Group', which aims to bring cytokine researchers together and so strengthen the field. This book is another example of her efforts to make this rapidly growing field more comprehensible.

This book has many strong points. It presents a clear historical perspective, describing the discovery of interferon and of tumour necrosis factor. It presents many useful tables of data, e.g. comparison of interferon α , β and γ , or molecular changes induced in interferon-treated cells, and useful figures. Another strong point is Dr Balkwill's breadth of knowledge in the field, so that molecular, cellular as well as clinical aspects are treated with equal surety. With the enormous growth of the literature in this field, it would have been tempting to oversummarize, and not show any data in this book. Dr Balkwill has resisted and by showing some of

the key experimental results makes the book more alive. Wisely, the length has been kept to a very reasonable 300 pages and the price, £18.50 in paperback, should permit it to reach the wide audience it deserves, from clinicians to molecular biologists.

What of its limitations? These are built into the task of writing a book in any rapidly moving field. The year 1989 has seen the cloning of new cytokines: interleukin-7, with potent activities on T and B cells, is certain to have important clinical uses, the interleukin 8 family, with its potent recruitment of leukocytes will also be important. Cytokine receptor cloning has really blossomed: the elusive IL-2 β (p.75) chain, IL-6 receptor, IL-4 receptor, IL-1 receptor, IL-7 receptor. But these new observations cannot detract from Dr Balkwill's achievement in summarizing the field, making this an accessible, understandable, and as such, a highly recommended book.

Marc Feldmann

Biochimica et Biophysica Acta, Volume 1000; Elsevier Science Publishers; Amsterdam, 1989; viii + 482 pages; \$58.00, Dfl.125.00, £35.00

For this celebration Volume the Managing Editors have chosen about 40 of the particularly significant articles which have appeared during the early years of the journal. The articles are reprinted with a short commentary from the original author. The aim of the commentary is to highlight the impact of the paper, to give the author the opportunity to reflect on how the seminal ideas arose at the time, and to consider how the paper has contributed to our present knowledge of the subject. It is hoped too that the readers will gain some insight into the human context of great discoveries which have furthered our understanding of life processes. The result is a fascinating volume even if the authors are often too modest

to entirely meet the objectives assigned to them. The text is liberally illustrated with photographs of the authors. This adds to the interest in spite of many of the photographs being undated.

The most disarming comment I noticed was that of Christian de Duve on the 'Intracellular localization of catalases and some oxidases in rat liver.' He writes that the paper "reads like a hodge-podge of recent results, put together mainly for the purpose of getting into print and gaining time for the leisurely writing of a full report. This I must confess is very much what it was."

On a more serious note, many of the commentaries succeed