

## Book Reviews

*M.H. Lesoff* (ed.)

**Immunological and Clinical Aspects of Allergy**

MTP Press, Lancaster 1981

443 pp.; £24.95

ISBN 0-85200-244-0

This multi-authored volume is one of the best and most stimulating introductory texts in this field. The term allergy is, however, used in a somewhat misleading way (as it is often the case!). According to *C. v. Pirquet* the term allergy denotes the state of *specifically* changed reactivity of the organism against a living microorganism, its products or other 'antigenic' compounds. He wrote explicitly: 'Allergy is not identical with hypersensitivity, but should unite the great complex of phenomena which we presently denote as "immune reactions". Immunity is then a secondary concept and should be limited to processes which lead to full protection of the organism.' [Klinische Studien über Vakzination; Deuticke, Wien 1907, p. 131]. Of course, *Pirquet* was fully aware of the fact that antibody production, the only observable biological basis of allergy in his time, was an important protective mechanism. In serum sickness, he found a disease process which was characterized by antibody production against non-pathogenic antigens. He realized that systemic and local anaphylaxis were also expressions of an allergic state. Furthermore, he stressed that protective (immune) processes, such as those observed in connection with re-vaccination, were accompanied by intense local inflammation and tissue damage and sometimes by more or less severe systemic adverse effects. Defence has a price. The 'Biological role of allergy', discussed in the first chapter of the present volume, was quite clear from the beginning, so was the existence of adverse allergic reactions or allergic disorders. In this book the term 'allergy' is often used instead of 'allergic disorder'. In chapter 3 on laboratory techniques, a description of ELISA and similar methods of growing importance is lacking. These are minor flaws in a most excellent book, which adequately covers not only the common allergic diseases of

the respiratory tract and the skin but also those of the gastro-intestinal organs, the kidney and the eye. In a very useful contribution, *Mygind and Thomsen* try to kill the myth that secretory otitis media and Ménière's disease are allergic disorders. In the last chapter, *Dewdney* discusses in a very stimulating way the effect of antibiotics on host defence. This book is warmly recommended.

Paul Kallós, Helsingborg

*A. de Weck, F. Kristensen, M. Landy* (eds.)

**Biochemical Characterization of Lymphokines**

Proceedings of the 2nd International

Lymphokine Workshop, Ermatingen 1979

Academic Press, New York 1980

XXXII + 622 pp.; US\$ 39.50

ISBN 0-12-213950-X

This volume contains data presented and discussed at the Second International Lymphokine Workshop, Ermatingen, May 1979. The workshop was subdivided into eight different sessions: (I) Macrophage and leukocyte migration inhibition factors, (II) Macrophage activation and chemotaxis, (III) Colony-stimulating, mitogenic and growth-promoting factors, (IV) Lymphotoxins and other cytotoxic factors, (V) Interferons, (VI) Nonantigen-specific monokines and lymphokines influencing T and B cell functions, (VII) Antigen-specific helper and suppressor factors, and (VIII) Effects of lymphokines *in vivo*.

The volume contains approximately one hundred reports. The majority of the reports are followed by a written version of the discussion of the presentation. Lymphokine research is a very active area. This is evident from this volume, which contains contributions dealing with a number of chemical as well as biological aspects of lymphokines. It is also evident that the Second International Lymphokine Workshop served an important purpose in giving scientists the possibility of comparing results and furthermore, in trying to limit the number of different factors.

A consensus was reached at the workshop with regard to the definition of two major factors that

modulate lymphocyte activation, Interleukin 1 and 2. The editors have included a short comment concerning this new nomenclature. However, a general summary with definitions and conclusions is lacking. Nevertheless, the book contains an impressive amount of data and for investigators involved in lymphokine research it constitutes a necessary source.

C. I. E. Smith, Stockholm

*J.P. Hearn (ed.)*

**Immunological Aspects of Reproduction and Fertility Control**

MTP Press, Lancaster 1980

253 pp.; £19.95

ISBN 0-85200-265-3

The first section of five chapters, 140 pages, deals with the immunological aspects of reproduction. In 'Immunological relationships between mother and fetus during pregnancy', *Kaye* gives a thorough and very interesting review in a phylogenetic perspective. *Cooper* deals with 'Immunological relationships between mother and conceptus in man'. He has a very unusual approach to his subject in refuting the concept of the fetus being equal to an allograft. In 'Immunological diagnosis of early pregnancy', *Findlay* presents the possibilities and limitations of all available tests for pregnancy possible to use in animals. In 'Immunological aspects of eclampsia and pre-eclampsia', *Redman* gives a very clear review of the current status of the confusingly contradictory opinions in this field. *Jones* gives a clear presentation of the current knowledge of 'Immunological factors in male and female infertility' in the human.

The second section of the book, 100 pages, deals with the immunological aspects of fertility control. In those five interesting chapters the authors explain the physiology, structure and antigenicity of the respective antigens, summarize the results achieved so far and discuss the future prospects of this field. *Fraser* deals with the 'Inhibition of reproductive function by antibodies to luteinizing hormone releasing hormone'. He reviews the results of experiments in birds, rodents, sheep and monkeys. *Aitken and Richardson* discuss 'Im-

munization against zona pellucida antigens' and report on their results in rabbits, mice, rats and hamsters. Three chapters all deal with chorionic gonadotrophin. *Stevens* summarizes the results of immunization of animals, especially baboons, in 'The current status of antipregnancy vaccines based on synthetic fractions of HCG'. *Talwar* in 'Vaccines based on the beta-subunit of HCG' discusses immunization of baboons and presents the phase I clinical trials using vaccine on women. *Hearn* reports on his experience of immunizing marmoset monkeys and discusses future possibilities of immunizing humans in 'The immunobiology of chorionic gonadotrophin'.

In the preface the editor expresses his intentions to give an up-to-date account on a fast-moving field that calls on several disciplines, to give an adequate background and a current review for research workers and clinicians and to provide a useful reference book for the student and newcomer. The editor and his co-authors certainly have succeeded in fulfilling these intentions in this very interesting book.

Margareta Unander, Göteborg

*H. Cottier (ed.)*

**Pathogenese – Ein Handbuch für die ärztliche Fortbildung I–II**

Springer, Berlin 1980

XXXVI + 2158 pp., Index: 127 pp., 234 fig.,

124 tab.; DM 880.–

ISBN 3-540-09215-3

It is an understatement to call these volumes a 'handbook'. 'Encyclopedia' is certainly more adequate. Only a scholar of the stature of *H. Cottier* could, together with eminent co-workers, succeed with such a monumental task: to elucidate the pathogenesis and pathomechanism of all known disorders, in more than 6,000 brief but satisfactory descriptions, informative tables and excellent schematic drawings. The book will be of great value to all physicians seeking reliable and up-to-date information about any disease. The subject index, a masterpiece in itself, consists of 127 pages. All doctors should own and consult this unique book.

Paul Kallós, Helsingborg