Book Reviews


The proceedings of an European Colloquium on Hypothalamic Hormones held at Tübingen, February 1974, provide a very useful and still up-to-date view on an active field of endocrinology. Some specific aspects of hypothalamic releasing and inhibiting hormones are discussed in greater detail. 8 of the 13 single contributions concentrate on reproductive endocrinology. The symposium has been organised and the proceedings edited by a chemist and an endocrinologist. Chemical aspects of isolation, characterisation and synthesis are therefore discussed as well as practical applications of releasing hormones in diagnostic endocrinology. The book of 287 pages includes a very comprehensive authors index (including references of the papers!). This assures an easy access to original papers on chemical and clinical aspects of hypothalamic hormones. The book is to be recommended to any chemist, biochemist, endocrinologist or non-specialist interested in the fascinating field of hypothalamic hormones.


This book provides useful information on practical aspects of radioimmunoassay methodology. The volume is dedicated to Dr. S.A. Berson. Three contributions are of general interest reviewing the principals, evaluating statistical analysis of assay results and discussing the possible labeling procedures. Critical evaluation of commercial radioimmunoassay kits is the main topic of the book. Possible pitfalls are analysed and kit procedures compared as regards information provided, time required, handling ‘facilities’, sensitivity, precision and reproducibility. The following single assays are discussed in detail: insulin, renin activity, digoxine, hormones of thyroid function (this chapter is especially comprehensive), gastrin, carcino-embryonic antigen and human growth hormone. The practical aspects of this seminar are evident from the introductory letter which discusses such problems as ‘Who does radioimmunoassay, who concentrates on tests requiring differing skills?’ It is concluded that this should not be the nuclear medicine, the endocrinology lab, nor the clinical pathologists, but specific RIAs should be studied in areas where the greater expertise exists. Not discussed is the economic aspect. Kits are known to be very expensive and the almost unlimited availability of assays of all kinds favour an uncritical use. The booklet (162 pages) including references, author index and subject index should be on the bookshelf of any radioimmunoassay kit user and this will certainly guarantee a large distribution!