Book Review


This book contains a series of review articles concerning cellular and molecular aspects of the immune response, and their alteration by drugs which also happen to be anti-neoplastic agents. Of the three titled subjects ‘Immunity’ is covered most extensively and effectively. The topics include: The specific localization of antigens in lymphoid cells and tissues; allogeneic inhibition; the role of cellular differentiation vs. cellular proliferation; coding and ambiguities in protein synthesis; the role of RNA in antibody formation; and the role of complement. The effect of drugs on the immunologic response receives appropriate emphasis by the inclusion of excellent articles by Sterzl, Schwartz and Berenbaum. Anyone whose work impinges to any extent on immunology – and this should certainly include chemotherapists -will find the book interesting, informative and stimulating.

Several suggestions are warranted, however. (1) ‘Cancer’ and, especially, tumor immunology should perhaps have received greater coverage than was provided by the single – though delightfully written – article by Prehn, so as to give the reader better appreciation of the important developments in this area. (2) An attempt to discuss a central problem relevant to anti-cancer immunity – as set forth so cogently by Dr. Mihich in the Preface – would have contributed greatly to our knowledge of the interrelationship between ‘Immunity, Cancer and Chemotherapy’. Dr. Mihich poses the following question: If tumors possess antigens not present in non-neoplastic adult tissue, why do they grow, despite their antigenicity, in the autochthonous host? He suggests a number of possible explanations such as immunologic tolerance, enhancement, etc. A review article concerning, for example, the relationship between the tumor and the autochthonous host, in various experimental tumor model systems, including work by Klein, Hellström, Hasek and others would certainly have been relevant. Such an article might merit inclusion in a subsequent Symposium, because the resolution of this problem would facilitate a rational approach to the treatment of tumors by a combination of Chemotherapy and Immunotherapy.

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