Further Section

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Book Reviews


Th. Inderbitzin discovered in J. H. Humphrey’s laboratory in 1956 the effect of antilymphocytic serum on delayed allergic skin reactions. Since then the interest in the effects of this serum has never ceased. The present conference evaluated the effect of horse-antihuman-lymphocytic serum on the survival of transplanted kidneys in patients. The material presented is not very large and the observation time is perhaps not sufficiently long. Two facts seem, however, to emerge. Firstly, treatment with antilymphocytic serum definitely prolongs the survival of homgrafted kidneys. Secondly, allergic complications due to the horse serum (or its purified y-globulin fraction containing the antilymphocytic activity) are surprisingly rare and mild. The mode of action is obviously not simply diminishing the number of circulating small lymphocytes, but is more complicated and far reaching. This conference seems to me to be a milestone in the history of organ transplantation. Besides its clinical importance, immunologists will find a wealth of important theoretical information in the presentations of such outstanding workers as J. H. Humphrey, T. A. Starzl, K. A. Porter, D. R. Stanworth, M. F. A. Woodruff, P. B. Medawar, A. P. Monaco and many others. The Ciba Foundation, especially Dr. G. E. W. Wolstenholme, is to be congratulated on the publication of this volume, small in size and great in importance.

P. Kallós, Helsingborg


This is a very useful book, despite of the fact that in some areas substantial progress has been made since the meeting. The title of this excellent book says enough of the contents. The structure and biosynthesis of gamma-globulins is in the very center of interest of immunologists. All aspects are expertly discussed and the pertinent literature thoroughly reviewed and quoted. It is not possible and certainly not necessary to give a more extensive review. One paper, presented at the Symposium, shall be mentioned, however. Johansson and Bennich presented for the first time their discovery of a new class of myeloma globulin IgND, which could be found later in appreciable amounts in the plasma of allergic indivi
duals. The authors give conclusive evidence that ‘reagins’ belong to this new class of immuno
globulins. This is a most important and interesting discovery. p jr allós Helsinbnr


Cross reactions between bacterial antigens and mammalian tissue antigens pose a challenging problem of ever growing importance. The inter-action of cells and microorganisms can also lead to the production of new antigens, which are not a natural structural component of the cell or of the microorganism (‘neo-antigens’). As it is well known, such cross reacting and neo-antigens play an important role in so-called auto-immune diseases, in
transplantation immunity and possibly also in neoplastic diseases. All pertinent problems are thoroughly reviewed and discussed in this volume, which certainly will be much appreciated and often consulted. p Kallós, Helsingborg

1 Int. Arch. Allergy 8: 150 (1956)

Book Review

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Alick Isaacs published his observations which lead to his discovery of interferon in 1957. Until his untimely death in 1967 he was one of the most active and successful workers in this special field and in general virology. The Ciba Foundation devoted the First International Symposium on Interferon to his memory, a well deserved tribute.

The Proceedings of this symposium are published in the present volume, carefully and expertly edited by G. E. W. Wolstenholme and Maeve O’Connor. Despite 10 years of intensive research it is not yet possible to give a clear-cut definition of interferon. The best is proposed by De Somer and Cocito: ‘Interferons are protein components of animal cells, which are either released, or synthesized and excreted, under a variety of stimuli, and make other cells of the same species incapable of replicating viruses’.

The properties, mode of action and production of interferon in vitro (in human amnion cultures) and in vivo (in experimental animals and men) have been thoroughly discussed. The main interest is concentrated upon the production of interferon in cultures of human amnion cells and by systemic stimulation in men. The production of interferon in vitro and in vivo can be induced not only by living or inactivated DNA or RNA viruses but also by a number of other stimuli. At present statolon, a virus-like preparation isolated from the fermentation filtrate of Penicillium stoloniferum, seems to be the most promising of these. It is interesting to note that basic polyaminoacids, such as poly-L-ornithine, potentiate the effect of statolon considerably.

The protection against different pathogenic viruses by interferon, administered passively or produced under stimulation with specific or non specific stimuli (such as statolon) is limited. Timing seems to be decisive. Virus multiplication is prevented, the cytopathogenic effects are not.

By presenting all facts, methods and also provocative concepts and ideas, the Ciba Symposium has, in my opinion, definitely influenced future research in this promising and important field. The results of this research, initiated by Alick Isaacs, are awaited with much interest and great expectations. p Kallós, Helsingborg