Book Review

V. St. Georgiev

Survey of Drug Research in Immunologic Disease, vol. 1
Aliphatic Derivatives
S. Karger, Basel 1983 542pp; Fr. 490.- ISBN 3-8055-3503-1

It is most difficult to review a book of over 500 pages which contains so much chemical and biological data, but the value of this publication lies in the manner by which chemicals relevant to immunological diseases are treated, first in a full description of formula, preparation, biological activity and references, and then in subject indexes which allow for easy identification. Not only does this arrangement make the book easy to use but there is also a biological activity cross-index. The full biological profile of each chemical series listed in the cross-index is contained in the biological subject index where compounds are arranged in alphabetical order. For example, penicillamine appears in the chemical subject index with sub-headings of lead salt, stability, structural elucidation and synthesis, in the biological subject index with sub-headings of biological activity, decomposition products and pharmaco-kinetics, and finally in the biological activity cross-index under the headings of anti-inflammatory, anti-arthritis, anti-rheumatic and immunosuppressive activities. Throughout the indexes, bold-face numbers indicate the series number and not the page number. This I found confusing, particularly as the Contents list uses page numbers. Even more confusing is the page number reference to a chapter, for page numbers have been omitted at the beginning of the 8 chapters. This also applies to the labelling of the series numbers at the top of the pages, for here again omissions occur (at the beginning of each chapter) to make the cross-index not so straightforward.

I have particularly stressed these irregularities as this is a good reference book, stated to offer unprecedented access to data on every chemical series or individual compound found to be active in the field of immunology over the past 20 years as well as older drugs of recognised importance. It is also true that the book, volume 1 of a series of at least 6 volumes, is of immense value to scientists directly involved in the synthesis and screening of biologically active compounds. A full account of the available patent literature is also included in the book to facilitate the rapid retrieval of information. However, the author states that he has not considered it his duty to judge the merit of activity, but rather his function to list the facts. This, in my view, does not enhance the value of the book, especially as the author trained as a chemist and became involved in immunotherapeutics. G. B. West, Epsom

News Item

European Society for Dermatological Research

A Clinically Oriented Symposium ‘The Urticarias’
A two-day ESDR Symposium on The Urticarias will be held in Robinson College, Cambridge, on the 10th and 11th January, 1984. The basic mechanisms of urticaria and clinical aspects will be discussed. Invited speakers will include Drs. K.F. Austen, R. Brimble-combe, D.L. Brown, R.R.A. Coombs, E. Cronin, H. Doeglas, L. Juhlin, W.G. van Ketel, RJ. Lachmann, E.W. Monroe, W.E. Parish and J.R. Vane. There will also be a limited number of free communications. Poster exhibits are also invited. Abstracts of about 200 words for free communications and posters should be sent to Prof. M.W. Greaves before 1st October, 1983. Details relating to the scientific programme may be obtained from Prof. M.W. Greaves, Institute of Dermatology, Homerton Grove, London E9, 6BX, UK. Information regarding registration may be obtained from Mrs. H. Hatfield, Postgraduate Medical Centre, Ad-denbrooke’s Hospital, Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 2QQ, UK; Tel. Cambridge (0223) 212216. Closing date for registration: 1st November, 1983.