Book Reviews

J.L. Turk Immunopharmacology
Research Monographs in Immunology, vol. 4 Elsevier Biomedical Press, Amsterdam 1982
Immunopharmacology is a relatively new discipline covering the subjects of immunology and pharmacology. It has had its own Journal since 1980 and so a research monograph on the subject is very topical.
After an introductory chapter detailing the anatomy of the immune response, receptors and soluble mediators are discussed, with emphasis on the specific interactions between mediators and immune cells. Lastly, the important fields of immunotoxicity and radioimmunoassay are fully reviewed.
Most of the chapters are first-class but that on Drug Sensitivity is disappointing. Much is said about allergy and drugs that are complete or incomplete antigens, yet little or no mention is made of genetic or environmental aspects of sensitivity of patients to drugs. What is also disappointing (to me) is that work reported more recent than 1981 does not appear to have been reviewed. In a subject which is rapidly changing in outlook, this cannot help the experimenter keep up-to-date. This last criticism refers also to several other chapters.
In the section on the pharmacology of histamine, I found no mention of ranitidine (a furan compound), only cimetidine (an imidazole) and its congeners, and this again indicates that more recent work reported in Journals has not been covered.
Nevertheless, the book is well presented and free of errors. Personally, I did not like the numbering of the subsections of each chapter, as, for example, on page 59 we find that 4.2.3.2.5 is the effect of histamine on lymphocyte receptors, and on page 259, 10.5.1.1.1 is precipitation of antigen-antibody complexes. All in all, the book should be on the shelves of research workers in the field, despite its outrageous price. G.B. West, London

M.H. Lessof (ed) Clinical Reactions to Food
I began reading this multi-authored book with great expectations. I believe that there is an urgent need for a modern and critical overview of the area, which the present volume covers.
Unfortunately, my expectations have only partly been fulfilled. There are three interesting and valuable introductory chapters on ‘Nutrition in the Western World’ (J. Macdonald), ‘The patient’s attitude to food’ (J.H. Lacey) and ‘Immunology and Physiology of Digestion’ (A. Ferguson and S. Strobel). Barnetson and Lessof challenge in their contribution ‘medical orthodoxy’, which is prevalent in this area. It is very useful that they point out the exaggerations of the ‘ecologists’ and the different forms of quackery, which still exist in the field of food allergy and intolerance. On the other hand, the etiologic role of dyes and other food additives in causing allergic or pseudo-allergic reactions is exaggerated by them. It had also
been necessary to clearly state that no valid evidence has been ever provided showing that rheumatoid arthritis or psychiatric syndromes are due to food allergy. Concerning multiple sclerosis the authors state that ‘none of the published reports suggests any evidence of immunological food allergy’. They fail to say what ‘immunological food allergy’ is! Unfortunately, the section under the heading ‘Diagnostic tests for diagnosis of food allergy and intolerance’ (what else should such tests be performed for?) lacks the conciseness that is most necessary. For instance, the authors state: ‘Where well-defined positive (5 mm) skin tests to food allergens correlate well with radio-allergosorbent tests, they appear to be useful in the diagnosis of IgE-mediated hypersensitivity’. In the next paragraph, however, they write: ‘RASTs are useful in the diagnosis of food allergy but are expensive and may not be more informative than prick-tests’. The totally absurd and useless ‘pulse-rate-test’, ‘sublingual-test’ and ‘end point titration’ of Rinkel are described as being of ‘more dubious value’, surely an unacceptable understatement. It seems to me important that the concept of the ‘total allergy syndrome’ is firmly refuted by the authors. This syndrome is mostly produced by habitual hyperventilators and is due to fluctuating hypocarbia, as pointed out by Nixon in 1982. The reference given by the authors is incorrect. Nixon’s letter to the editors appeared in Lancet i: 404 (1982). On p. 516 of the same volume Nixon’s assumption has been ‘supported and amplified’ by Lum, who summarized the findings on more than 2,000 cases of chronic habitual hyperventilation, observed at Papworth Hospital from 1965 to 1981. This is a quite common syndrome, which often misleads laymen as well as doctors and lies at the bottom of pseudo-allergic reactions to food.

The three clinical chapters, which constitute the most important part of the book, are disappointing. The above mentioned indefinite diagnostic criteria are partly responsible for this. In the chapter on food allergy in childhood, Soothi//states that ‘despite the excellent clinical investigations of Prausnitz... food allergy has been irrationally questioned and underdiagnosed, especially in children’. Prausnitz and Küstner investigated a single case with fish allergy and their classical experiment had no relevance concerning the frequency of fish- or food-allergy. Their aim was to show that firm evidence of the allergic nature of signs and symptoms caused by ingestion of the ‘merest trace of marine or fresh-water fish’ could be provided. It seems to me irrational to regard, e.g., behavioral disorders, enuresis and arthritis as possibly due to food allergy. This means neglecting the results of Prausnitz and Küstner. The same objections have to be raised against the chapter on reactions to food in adults by Lessof. Nevertheless, many valuable practical suggestions are made in both chapters, first and foremost concerning the management of disorders caused by foods, whatever the underlying pathomechanism may be. On p. 105 Lessof states that ‘patients who respond to artificial colors often also have an aspirin idiosyncrasy’. I have quite extensive experience with ASA-intolerant patients and none of them reacted to tartrazine or other food-additives. Stevenson reported recently that he failed to elicit reactions in ASA-intolerant asthmatics with tartrazine. Moreover, Lessof states that: ‘on 378

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clinical grounds alone aspirin reactions such as asthma, rhinitis or eczema suggest an allergic origin’. Thus, he neglects the extensive and irrefutable evidence, published in numerous papers since 1975, that the adverse reactions to ASA, clinically resembling allergic diseases (by the way, never eczema), are pseudo-allergic reactions (PAR) occurring in genetically predisposed individuals.
It is a progress that a chapter is devoted to pseudo-allergic reactions to food (Moneret-Vautrin). However, unclear definitions and invalid diagnostic criteria prevail even in this chapter. It is enough to say, that perorally administered histamine has no effect whatsoever. This is confirmed by the author’s own experimental findings. Despite this, she attributes PAR to food more or less rich in histamine. Another striking example for carelessness is the statement on p. 137 that histamine can elicit symptoms when ‘histaminase levels are reduced or diamine oxidase levels are low”. Or should it be supposed that Moneret-Vautrin was not aware that histaminase is but another name for diamine oxidase? Direct histamine release in genetically predisposed individuals, e.g. by shellfish, nuts and strawberries, is a well known cause of PAR. The author stresses that prick-tests are negative in individuals showing this type of PAR. In the mentioned cases – free histamine in food or direct histamine release by certain foods in some cases – prick-tests should be (and are) positive. On p. 149 a paper by Gerber et al. is quoted in support of that tartrazine is an inhibitor of cyclooxygenase. In fact, Gerber et al. showed clearly that tartrazine and its metabolites have no such effect. There is then a lot of speculation and anecdotal evidence on the role of, e.g., starchy foods, alcohol, food additives and nitrates as the cause of pseudo-allergic reactions. Hanington contributed a chapter on migraine. The author rightly stresses that migraine is not due to food allergy. However, there is much speculation and inadequate evidence in this contribution too.

The final chapter by Cooke on coeliac disease and inflammatory bowel disease is informative and well referenced.

Despite of a number of valuable contributions I cannot recommend this book. Paul Kallós, Helsingborg

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13th Postgraduate Immunohistochemistry Course
February 13-17, 1984, Institute for General and Experimental Pathology, University of Innsbruck, Austria
Information: Secretariat of Univ.-Prof. Dr. G. Wick, Institut für Allgemeine und Experimentelle Pathologie der Universität Innsbruck, Fritz-Pregl-Strasse 3, A-6020 Innsbruck, Austria.

Postgraduate participants only (MD, PhD, etc.) – number of participants limited to 30 – deadline for application: January 10, 1984 – the course consists of a theoretical part and practical exercises with emphasis on the standardization of reagents and methods.

Language: English.
Theoretical part: general immunological introduction, theoretical basis of immunohistochemistry (optics, serology, test performance), possibilities of standardization.
Practical exercises: immunofluorescence and immunoperoxidase methods, direct and indirect techniques, membrane immunofluorescence, analysis of reagents, monoclonal antibodies, microscopy.
Seminars: Semiautomated membrane immunofluorescence, double staining techniques, photometry, quantitative immunofluorescence, pattern recognition, laser immunofluorescence, fluorescence activated cell sorter (FACS).

International Convocation on Immunology
The Ernest Witebsky Center for Immunology, State University of New York at Buffalo, announces the 9th International Convocation on Immunology to be held June 25-28, 1984 at the
Buffalo Marriott Inn, Amherst, New York. The theme of the program, ‘Antibodies: Protective, Destructive and Regulatory Role”, will include presentation of papers by distinguished scientists internationally recognized as experts on the topics: Production and Function of Antibodies; Protective Role of Antibodies; Antibodies to Foreign Cells; Antibodies to Neoplastic Cells; Regulatory Mechanisms; Autoantibodies; Allergy; Immune Complexes; and Administration of Antibodies for Prevention and Therapy. Further information may be obtained by contacting Dr. James F. Mohn, Director, The Ernest Witebsky Center for Immunology, 210 Sherman Hall, SUNY/Buffalo, NY 14214(AC 716 831-2848) (USA).