

BOOK REVIEWS

The Immune Response and its Suppression. An International Symposium
Editor : E. SORKIN. *Antibiotica et Chemotherapia* Vol. 15. S. Karger. Basel and New York. 1969. pp 422. Price £ 9. 16s.

With transplantation in the popular news, immunosuppression has been the subject of intensive studies all over the world. The essential prerequisite for this is an understanding of the basic immune response and the steps at which this may be turned off, through pharmacologic, physiologic or physical means. The book is an excellent collection of expert thoughts on various aspects of this topic. The initial chapters describe the complexity and fate of antigens, the presence and site of recognition mechanisms in the fowl, the stimulation of lymphocytes for antibody production and the molecular aspects of the kinetics of antibody forming cell response.

There is a lucid description of specific anti-thymocyte antibodies and their activities, and of immunological tolerance and inhibition by haptens. Sterzl contributes results of his studies on immunologically competent cell differentiation using immunological inhibition. Berenbaum's designs of selective therapeutic schedules for immunosuppressive agents based on experimental work and mathematical analysis of dose-response curves is one of the best chapters in this volume. There are several good contributions on the modes of action and uses of antilymphocyte serum and

on the immunosuppression induced by viruses, carcinogens and other agents. Sterzl and his colleagues survey perspectives in organ transplantation including host-graft interaction, role of thymectomy, post-operative development of neoplasia, role of histocompatibility typing and projections of survival after transplantation.

The rapid thrusts being made on various areas of immunology would perhaps extend, confirm or deny the observations and hypotheses contained in the proceedings of this symposium, but for the moment and perhaps for many years, the contents of this book would be valuable reading for every one concerned with a study of the immune response and its suppression for experimental or therapeutic purposes.

R. K. CHANDRA.

An Inquiry Concerning Growth, Disease and Ageing. PHILIP R. J. BURCH. *Oliver and Boyd*, Edinburgh. 1968. pp 213. Price 63s.

The author has made a remarkable attempt at presenting a unified approach to the explanation of multitudinous physiological and pathological phenomena seen in biology. Based to some extent on the original observations of Sir Macfarlane Burnet on self recognition, forbidden clones and autoaggression, Dr. Burch uses his expert knowledge of mathematics and physics to discuss age patterns of disease, sex influence on normal growth control, anatomic distribution

of disease and the intertwining relationship between genetics, molecular biology, immunity, autoaggression and hypersensitivity. A wide variety of conditions are touched upon, varying from cancer to schizophrenia, to illustrate the central theme of the book. There is an interesting chapter on therapeutic possibilities based on such postulates; this includes the role of eugenics, the artificial strategy of correct mating through 'test tube babies', the recognition of fetal phenotype and the ethics of abortion in case of an abnormal genetic inheritance, etc.

This is a most interesting and scientifically thought provoking topic, presented in a masterly and logical manner, with pertinent references to the literature. It would prove to be of outstanding interest for everyone concerned with biology, be they medical doctors, geneticists, immunologists, molecular biologists and others.

R. K. CHANDRA.

Allergy : Its Treatment and Case.
H.W. BOTTOMLEY *Funk and Wagnalls*,
New York, N.Y. 1968. pp 150. Price
U.S. \$ 4. 95.

The widespread occurrence of allergic symptoms varying in severity from annoying hay fever to life threatening bronchial asthma, has created the need for a simple treatise giving lucid explanation of the nature of allergy, its causes, manifestations and management, for the use of nonmedical adult patients and for parents of allergic children. This book is an excellent monograph satisfying these needs. The description of various forms of allergic disease and their

causes is given in an easy-to-read and simple, style which would be comprehensible to the average literate. Understandably, there are some dogmatic statements but in a book of this nature, it is better to avoid controversies, for which there are enough medical journals and specialist books to write about. It might be a good idea to encourage its translation into other languages, so that it can find a receptive market in non-English speaking areas as well. A few diagrammatic illustrations may also be in order, when the next edition is brought out.

R. K. CHANDRA.

Immunological Concepts. LOYD Y. QUINN. *The Iowa State University Press*, Ames, Iowa. 1968. pp 260.

A noble attempt seems to have gone astray. The author has attempted "to describe immunological processes in terms of molecular as well as cellular interactions", "to honor pioneer immunologists properly and to organize the contributions of immunologists, biochemists, geneticists and biophysicists into as clear a picture of immunological agents and mechanisms as is possible". What emerges is a brief outline of immune processes, with the bulk of the book being filled with photographs and electron micrographs of cells and selected micro-organisms, a comprehensive glossary, 484 references to the literature and index. It is doubtful if the purpose of the author has been achieved by the end result of his efforts. It is unlikely that the book would have an appeal to any or several groups of students or workers.

R. K. CHANDRA.

Modern Practice in Immunization.
D. D. BANKER. *Indian Journal of Medical Sciences*, Bombay. 1969. pp 206. Price Rs. 20.

The second edition of this manual brings together the historic and practical knowledge concerning immunization, with incorporation of several recent trends. The contents are orderly and describe all the known protective agents, active and passive, against infectious diseases. There is a rather extensive but relatively uncritical review of the literature. Whereas it may be didactically appealing to follow historic developments in the evolution of immunization, it is more practical for a manual of this type to single out and stress practical and topical themes; this is lacking. There is some loose mixing of author opinion and scientific supported facts. One other drawback of the book is the poor description of modern immunological trends on which the basis for immunization is built. I allude to the role of the thymus and other lymphoid tissues. For instance, in the contraindications to smallpox vaccination, there is no mention of defects of cellular immunity, in which the step could prove fatal. There is no mention of attenuated vaccinia virus vaccine. Although it is commendable to have a local publication like this, the contents do not favourably compare with the cheaper and compact manuals on the topic available through the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom.

R. K. CHANDRA.

Scientific Writing for Graduate Students. A Manual on the Teaching of Scientific Writing. Editor F. PETER WOODFORD. *The Rockefeller University Press*, New York. 1968. pp 190.

"For the scientist there is nothing sure but death, taxes and scientific literature" (B. I. Goldberg, *New Engl. J. Med.* 282: 635, 1970). The achievement of the last named is the subject of this manual, which goes about its business in an orderly systematic way. Starting from the stage of planning a journal article, the authors carry the uninitiated through the steps of first draft, structural alterations, polishing the style, editing and the final steps. The possible response from and to the editor is also discussed. The manual also includes description of several related topics such as the design of figures and tables, thesis writing and searching the scientific literature. A most useful inclusion is discussion of oral presentation, which should be read by all those presenting their work at conferences and meetings.

The text is in an easy to read style and one could go through the book over the weekend, only to come back to it for further guidance when actually preparing a paper for publication or presentation. There are ample apt illustrations of mistakes commonly made and how to avoid them. The book should be compulsory reading for postgraduate students and junior teachers and researchers. I dare say that even many senior teachers and scientific workers would learn a lot from its perusal.

R. K. CHANDRA.