Book Reviews

Plasma and Recombinant Blood Products in Medical Therapy, edited by C.V. Prowse. Pp. viii + 227, not illustrated. Wiley & Sons, Chichester, New York, Brisbane, Tokyo, Singapore, 1992. £24.95, hardback.

This specialized monograph on modern biotechnological aspects of plasma for fractionation is intended as a primer for those interested in the use of therapeutic blood products. The book describes how we have arrived at the current state of the art, with consideration of the advantages or disadvantages offered by molecular biology. Topics covered range from a description of plasma product manufacture, through new approaches to preparing coagulation factor products, to a consideration of therapeutic antibodies. In addition there are chapters on haemoglobin, cytokines and growth factors. Fourteen out of 16 contributors come from Scotland, and the chapters are almost all of excellent quality.

The Scottish preference for ion exchange chromatographic purification of factor VIII is shown by devoting little more than one page to factor VIII prepared by monoclonal antibody purification (in over 200 pages). However, in probably the largest market for factor VIII concentrate (USA), something like two thirds of patients are currently treated with either Monoclate or Hemofil M, and increasing numbers are being treated similarly elsewhere. For a monograph that seeks to sell outside Scotland, this cursory and inadequate treatment of immuno-purified factor VIII concentrates represents a surprising omission.

The book can be recommended as an excellent text for being brought up to date in many new aspects of the use of blood and related products in transfusion medicine.

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Magnesium – A Relevant Ion, edited by B. Lasserre & J. Durlach. Pp. viii + 480, not illustrated. J. Libbey, London, Paris, Rome, 1991. £46, hardback.

The editors point out the 'pivotal' role of magnesium in all living organisms. Because the volume represents the proceedings of the Third European Congress on Magnesium this results in the work containing an amazing divergence of information about the role of magnesium in everything from its effects on plant yields to dementia. This does not mean that for the medical reader the interest may be patchy. There are, however, several chapters which represent excellent reviews of their areas. The State of the Art Lecture on the renal handling of magnesium by De Rouffignac *et al.* is a complete review of the subject and the data on the hormonal modulation of renal magnesium transport fascinating. Shechter reviews the role of magnesium as a therapeutic agent in acute myocardial infarction. He has collated five recent double-blind control trials of magnesium supplementation and shows an 11.2% mortality rate with placebo and 3% in those given magnesium. He points out that magnesium therapy is inexpensive, safe and simple which are power-

ful argument for its use. For those of us interested in magnesium this text represents an excellent review in many areas. For those not quite as interested certain chapters are excellent reviews of their areas. The volume, however, still does not answer the question of why magnesium is so vital in many processes and yet clinical magnesium deficiency is such a rare problem.

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Clinical Practice of Nuclear Medicine, edited by A. Taylor, Jr. & F.L. Datz. Pp. xi + 471, 310 illustrations. Churchill Livingstone, New York, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, Tokyo, 1991. £65.00, hardback.

This is an excellent review of the clinical practice of nuclear medicine edited by and contributed to by workers in the USA. I say this because the introductory chapters on the basic principles of nuclear medicine are really of very high quality except that, to the European, the absence of grays and sieverts, and the enthusiasm for curies as distinct from becquerels seems a little odd in 1992. The basic principles however, provide an excellent aide-memoire for the clinician and technician who are working in the field, but perhaps not full-time.

The section on cardiological nuclear medicine by Gordon DePuey and Andrew Taylor was excellent, and indicates with great clarity the enormous amount of information that can be obtained about cardiac function and myocardial perfusion without resorting to evasive techniques. The book is well worth possessing for this chapter alone.

Each system is dealt with extremely thoroughly and competently with the technical details being laid out clearly and succinctly. This includes a chapter on peripheral vascular imaging, both venous and arterial. This is not widely used in the United Kingdom but there are aspects which seem very interesting such as a technique aimed at identifying ischaemic from non-ischaemic ulcers. There is a separate chapter on gallium imaging, of particular value in inflammatory disease and I discovered the fact that, in a patient with AIDS, an abnormal chest radiograph accompanied by a normal gallium scan of lung was strongly suggestive of Kaposi's sarcoma.

There was also a chapter on radionuclide palliation of bone pain due to skeletal metastases and radiocolloid therapy in the control of malignant effusions which would certainly suggest that this form of therapy was more widely used in the United States than it is in Britain.

Overall, I would strongly recommend this book in spite of its lack of SI units.

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