Books received


Book reviews

Beta Blockers

Edited by HELMUT LYDITIN and GEORG LOHMOLLER. Pp. 159, illustrated. Hans Huber, Bern, Stuttgart and Vienna, 1980. Fr. 27.00, DM 31.00.

In the last 10 years beta-adrenoceptor blocking drugs have established themselves as drugs of first choice in management of angina pectoris and essential hypertension, and most physicians use them regularly; yet there is still considerable misunderstanding about their clinical pharmacology and needless fear about their unwanted effects. There is a place, therefore, for an authoritative and impartial book devoted to the action and therapeutic uses of these drugs. Unfortunately this volume does not really fulfil these expectations. It is an English translation of a book originally published in German in 1977, and so important subjects such as the established use of beta-blockers in glaucoma are inadequately discussed. The influence of propranolol on thyroid hormones is not mentioned. The use of West German brand names rather than approved ones in some of the tables is unfortunate and a reminder of its original intent. With considerable re-editing and updating this book could prove useful, but cannot be recommended in its present edition for an international 1980 readership.

Chemical Carcinogenesis


This edition of the British Medical Bulletin is the fourth issue on the subject of chemical carcinogenesis since 1947. It consists of a series of excellent review articles which summarize what is known about the mechanisms of action of the various agents which induce cancer in man and animals. The subjects covered include the activation of chemical carcinogens, the reaction of alkylating agents with DNA, the anticarcinogenic changes which accompany carcinogenesis (a useful review which highlights some of the problems associated with tumour immunity), and many other carcinogenic processes. As always with this series, the standard is high and it will be regarded as essential reading for those interested in experimental cancer and cancer epidemiology. I found some of the chemistry a bit difficult but I am sure that most clinicians will find much of value.

Clinics in Haematology


This volume is another contribution in the valuable 'Clinics in Haematology' series. The editors have brought together an experienced group of scientists covering the field of the porphyrias. There is an excellent account by Moore of haem synthesis, breakdown and its control, and thereafter chapters giving an account of the clinical syndromes, porphyrias in animals, an account of laboratory diagnosis, the effect of drugs and finally observations on porphyrins in disorders not primarily affecting porphyrin metabolism.

There is considerable overlap between the contributions of different authors and one is left a bit confused about just...