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Postgraduate Medical Journal publishes original papers on subjects of current clinical importance and welcomes review articles with extensive, up-to-date bibliographies as guides to further reading. Several symposia are published each year, each devoted to a single subject and written by specialists in different disciplines. Most issues include authoritative Current Surveys of clinical problems, and well documented Reports of cases of particular interest, and Book Reviews.

A 'Notice to Contributors' is published on the inside back cover of this issue. The Editor reserves the right to make changes which may clarify or condense papers where this is considered desirable.

The Journal is covered by *Current Contents*, *Biological Abstracts*, *ASCA*, *ISI/BIOMED* and *Science Citation Index*.

EDITORIAL MATTERS

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Postgraduate Medical Journal is published monthly for the Fellowship of Postgraduate Medicine by Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd. The subscription price for 1984 is £60.00 (U.K.), £72.00 (overseas), \$142.50 (U.S.A. & Canada) post free. Subscribers in the U.S.A. and Canada should send their orders to Lippincott/Harper, Journal Division, 2350 Virginia Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740, U.S.A. The price of single issues is £6.00 (\$11.70), postage extra. If payments are made by bank transfer, all charges shall be at the remitter's expense. Current issues for North and South America, the Indian Sub-Continent, Australasia and the Far East are sent by air to regional distribution points from where they are forwarded to subscribers by surface mail. Any back numbers are normally despatched by surface to all regions, except North America and India, where they are sent by air freight. U.S. Mailing Agent: Expeditors of the Printed Word Ltd, 527 Madison Ave, Suite 1217, New York, NY 10022. Second class postage paid at New York, NY. Postmaster: send address corrections to *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, c/o Expeditors of the Printed Word Ltd., 527 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022 (US mailing agent). Orders and business correspondence should be addressed to Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0EL (Telephone Oxford 240201).

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Books received

Palliative Care: the Management of Far-Advanced Illness. Edited by DEREK DOYLE. Pp. vii + 536, illustrated. Croom Helm, London, Canberra, The Charles Press, Philadelphia, 1984. £25.00.

Saunders Dictionary and Encyclopedia of Laboratory Medicine and Technology. Edited by JAMES L. BENNINGTON. Pp. xix + 1674, illustrated. W. B. Saunders, Philadelphia, London, Toronto, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Sydney, Tokyo, 1984. £40.00.

Book reviews

Annual Review of Immunology Vol. 1

Edited by W. E. PAUL, C. G. FATHMAN and H. METZGER. Pp. 666, illustrated. Annual Reviews Inc., Palo Alto, California, 1983. \$30.00.

In an increasingly complicated and diverse science such as immunology, there is a great need for good 'state of the art' reviews. This new entry to the Annual Review series is one which will be welcomed by immunologists in all areas of the discipline, for it is to the research immunologist that this book is directed. It is of little value to the clinician, unless he/she has a highly sophisticated knowledge of the subject and even then as much of the material is mouse orientated, those concerned with human immunology must hope for enlightenment in future editions.

The book begins with an excellent chapter by Elvin Kabat, describing how he began research 50 years ago and outlines his career for the first 21 years. The financial strictures of today are considerably easier to cope with than the political ones he endured during the McCarthy era. Among other chapters in the book are highly detailed reviews in which immunological tolerance at the clonal level, major histocompatibility restriction of T and B cell responses to viral antigens and mechanisms of T and B cell interactions are well discussed.

There are two chapters devoted to the genetics of the mouse major histocompatibility complex, which, although overlapping in the general area, are very different in detail. Similarly there are chapters on the structural basis of antibody function and on immunoglobulin genes and, to bewilder even the immunologist, a complicated chapter on the genetics, expression and function of idiotypes.

The biochemistry of T and B cell growth and differentiating factors is well advanced, even to the extent of the IL2 gene being cloned. Hence the chapters on antigen specific T cell factors and B cell growth factors are comprehensive and informative.

There are further chapters on T cell clones, immunoregulatory T cell pathways, on transplantation in experimental animals and on mediators of inflammation. All the chapters in this book assume a very high level of basic knowledge and it is only the professional research immunologist who is going to understand them and derive any benefit from these very well written, but highly complicated reviews. For the doctor wanting a more general immunological teaching, the book is not to be recommended.

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Disorders of Thrombin Formation

Edited by ROBERT W. COLMAN. *Methods in Hematology Series*, Vol. 7. Pp. xi + 161, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, New York, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, 1983. £25.00.

This edited manual provides current methodology for measurement of zymogens, the products of their enzyme cleavage and the measurement of enzyme-inhibitor complexes.

Because another volume in the same series has already been published on factors VIII and IX (haemophilia A and B) these topics are not included.

The book's focus is on the use of immunochemical techniques. Time-honoured coagulation assays involving the thrombin-fibrinogen reaction receive one chapter's attention dealing with the standardization of thromboplastin for the one stage prothrombin time and lipid for the partial thromboplastin time.

The book begins with a chapter on the use of chromogenic substrates for the assay of prothrombin, factor X, prekallikrein, factor XII and plasminogen. Thereafter there is a chapter devoted to the initial stages of the coagulation cascade. Radiochemical assays that measure the cleavage of tritiated peptides are described in the kinetic analysis of factor X. A description is provided of the very sophisticated techniques for distinguishing between the normal and abnormal prothrombin molecules in patients on warfarin. There is an interesting account of the lupus anticoagulant and how its properties can be studied. A chapter is devoted to heparin assays.

The last chapter describes how to measure fragments split from prothrombin in the generation of thrombin and also techniques for the assay of 'thrombin-antithrombin' complexes in the blood.

This book is very specialized but with the widespread interest in haemostasis and thrombosis in Western societies it deserves to be purchased extensively by coagulation laboratories. It deserves to be a success and the editor Robert W. Colman should be congratulated in his selection of contributors and in the discipline imposed by him to turn in manuscripts which represent the present state of the art at the date of publication.

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Essentials of Human Embryology

By S. M. BHATNAGAR, M. L. KOTHARI and KOPA A. MEHTA. 2nd edn. Pp. 244, illustrated. Orient Longman, Hyderabad, (Distributed by Sangam Books, London), 1983. £4.95.

An interesting book well illustrated with many line drawings, most of which are original. The diagrams are informative and are good enough to have survived rather mediocre printing and poor paper.

The book contains a useful standard text marred by a rather bizarre and naive first chapter, where the authors attempt to explain their philosophy. One can have sympathy with their views but not their inaccurate attempt to justify them.

The flow of their explanations of embryological development is marred by frequent attempts at humour, a difficult thing to achieve at the best of times, and made even more difficult in an embryology context.

If the book is to be aimed at a British market the rather verbose text must be ruthlessly pruned and the amount of detail curtailed.

If all the information in this book is essential, then one is left to wonder what the non-essential material contains. We must convey the message to authors of textbooks for medical students that the student has a vast load of information competing for his time, and what he really needs from most authors is a summary of the essentials of their subject that have a relevance to clinical learning and practice. The detailed text book has to take second place and

Postgraduate Medical Journal: Notice to Contributors

Typescripts. Two complete copies should be sent to the Editor, Postgraduate Medical Journal, Chandos House, 2 Queen Anne Street, London W1M 9LE. Papers should be typewritten on one side of the paper only, with a 1½ inch margin, and the lines should be double spaced. The paper should bear the name of the author(s) with their degrees and the name of the laboratory or research institute where the work has been carried out. The full address of the principal author should be given as a footnote.

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Standard usage. The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* is used as a reference for all spelling and hyphenation. Verbs which contain the suffix -ize (-ise) and their derivatives should be spelt with the z. Statistics and measurements should always be given in figures, i.e. 10 min, 20 hr, 5 ml, except where the number begins the sentence. SI units should be used wherever possible.

Figures. In the text Arabic numbers, e.g. Fig. 3, should be used. They should be marked on the backs with the name(s) of the author(s) and the title of the paper. The top of each figure should be indicated with an arrow on the reverse side. Each figure must bear a reference corresponding to a similar number in the text. Photographs and photomicrographs should be unmounted glossy prints and should not be retouched. Line diagrams should be on separate sheets; they should be drawn with black Indian ink on white paper and should be twice the size of the final reproduction. The originals of line diagrams, prepared as described above, may be submitted in photographs of similar size. The legends of all figures should be typed together on a single sheet of paper headed 'Captions to Figures'.

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Offprints. These may be purchased if ordered on the form which will be sent to the senior author with the proofs.

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