
The first observation one makes of these volumes is the amazing list of contributors—a veritable Who's Who in Endocrinology—a total of 210! The general editor, the late Solomon A. Berson, introduces this monumental and unique masterpiece by stating that the purpose of the series is "to lead the investigator and the clinical endocrinologist to the thorough exploitation of newer methodology in the understanding of hormonal mechanisms and their disorders." Each section consists not only of "technical descriptions," but of "discussions of principles, rationale, limitations and pitfalls" with frequent "reviews of the current status of endocrine biochemistry and physiology." Moreover, the authors "have been closely associated with discoveries or developments in their subjects of their discussions." The reader quickly discovers that these statements are in fact accurate.

The next observation the reader soon makes is the excellent organization. Volume 1 consists of Part 1, "The Thyroid," with 16 chapters and Part 2, "The Biogenic Amines," with 20 chapters. Each chapter is characterized by divisions and subdivisions presenting the reader with a rare view of how completely and thoroughly a discussion of ideas and technical descriptions can be presented in outline form. Volume 2, entitled "Peptide Hormones," is presented in two sections totaling 30 chapters in nearly 1300 pages. As in volume 1, the material in these chapters is thorough, concise, and clearly written. Each chapter is replete with references. In several of the longer chapters, a number of authors have written individual portions, and the entire material is well edited and flows smoothly from one section to the next.

Several chapters in volume 2 are devoted to a thorough discussion of the general aspects of peptide hormones—the methods of extraction, purification, and measurement, as well as a complete review of the regulation of hormone secretion and the mechanisms of action. These well-written chapters include some on radioimmunoassay written by Drs. Berson and Rosalyn S. Yalow. The reader cannot help realizing the great extent to which the radioimmunoassay technique has revolutionized our knowledge of modern endocrinology. The principles of radioimmunoassay are not only covered thoroughly in these general introductory chapters, but are again discussed in detail as the method relates to the individual chapters on specific hormones. Chapters devoted to specific peptide hormones include growth hormone, ACTH, thyroid-stimulating hormone, prolactin, lipotropins, insulin, glucagon, calcitonin, gastrin, secretin, cholecystokinin-pancreozymin, erythropoietin, and the vasoactive "tissue hormones" angiotensin I and II and bradykinin. Space here does not permit an adequate review of each chapter. However, the discussion of each peptide hormone follows this general outline scheme: extraction, fractionation, and biochemical characterization; physiological hormonal effects (in vivo and in vitro); measurement of the hormone (bioassay, radioimmunoassay, radioreceptor assay, immunofluorescent assay); regulation of secretion; and clinical evaluation of hormonal excess and deficiency.

A final volume, on steroid hormones, under the general editorship of R.I. Dorfman, is scheduled for publication this fall. If this volume is as thorough and well organized as these first two, then it will be well worth the price. It is a pleasure to recommend these books to the clinical chemist. These volumes will be indispensable to anyone interested in a compendium of endocrine methodology and a comprehensive background in the theoretical, biochemical, physiological, and clinical aspects of endocrinology.

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In this volume the editor has collated material presented at two symposia in 1970 and 1971, along with some additional material. The methodology is described by densitometry and the presentations are designed to indicate the ease and reliability of in situ quantitation. In the area of biochemistry, the host of subjects discussed includes lipids, carbohydrates, amino acids, steroids, purines, polynucleotides, and gangliosides. Polymers, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, and air pollutants are also covered in other chapters. In most instances specific details of the analyses are given in reasonable surveys of the state of the art circa 1970. The illustrations and tabular data are helpful adjuncts to the lucid presentations.

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This book is the first part of the proceedings of the second International Colloquium on Prospective Biology organized by the Association for Biochemical and Pharmaceutical research of Lorraine, held in Pont-à-Mousson, France, in late 1972. The remainder of the proceedings of this meeting were published under the title "Reference Values in Human Chemistry" and has already been reviewed in this journal [April issue].

The topics considered in this volume are concerned, first, with the organization of laboratories and the use of semi-automation in the clinical chemistry laboratory; a second section is devoted to the handling of laboratory information and inevitably is concerned with the use of automatic data processing. The third section of the volume is devoted to the problem of quality assurance—both within a laboratory and among laboratories. The final section of the book, entitled "Prospective Biology," contains glimpses of what the future in clinical chemistry is likely to contain, especially in the areas of immunology, cellular analyses, and the quantitative measurement of steroid hormones. New methods, including physical analytical techniques, are also reviewed.

The book is in French and English, with more papers in the former language. Most of the speakers at the meeting were French, although the rest of Europe, and even the United States, was well represented. The meeting thus was truly international, and many different viewpoints are represented in the proceedings, although a French flavor predominates. The papers range from general philo-