Book reviews

Therapeutic Control of Inflammatory Diseases. Advances in Inflammation Research, Vol. 7. Eds. I. Otterness, R. Capetola, S. Wong. Pp. 311. US\$ 60.00. Raven Press. New York. 1984.

This book contains papers presented at the first International Conference of the Inflammation Research Association held in New York in November 1982. It consists principally of accounts of laboratory experiments using in-vitro systems or experimental animals. The first third of the book is concerned with arachidonic acid and its metabolites. This is followed by a section on aspects of the immune response, and then by several reviews on second line inflammatory drugs and experimental animal models of arthritis. The book concludes with abstracts from papers presented at the meeting.

In common with many others of its type, this volume contains a number of papers whose purpose is obscure. They fail to include sufficient detail to be of use to the specialist reader but lack the background and structure needed by others. There are, however, a number of useful articles. One series by W. A. Scott *et al.* (Rockefeller University), P. Vadas and W. Pruzanski (Toronto), R. J. Flower *et al.* (Wellcome and Naples), and F. Hirata (NIH) describes the control of arachidonate metabolism. The articles by J. S. Goodwin *et al.* (New Mexico) and S. L. Kunkel and S. W. Chensue (Ann Arbor) would make useful compulsory reading for any immunologist still hoping to slide through life without having to acknowledge the existence of prostaglandins. A. C. Allison writes a lucid account of the role of macrophage activation in inflammation. There is a thoughtful discussion of the Dumonde/Glynn rabbit model of arthritis by I. M. Hunneyball. J. M. Stuart provides a valuable summary of the technical pitfalls to be avoided in the induction of arthritis by type II collagen.

I found this book difficult to read. It was a relief to find, on p.224, a friendly set of Kekulé's chemical abbreviations

– so much more comprehensible than 5(S), 12(R) dihydroxy-6,14 *cis*-8,10-*trans*-eicosatetraenoic acid.

J R ARCHER

Rheumatology. By David M Grennan. Pp. 231. £5.95. Bailliere Tindall: London. 1984.

Monographs often have, to my mind, attractions lacking in the multiple author textbooks. Indeed there seem to be few of the massive works I used to read before the MRCP examination, such as Fishberg, White, or Wood, which managed to be monographs and major comprehensive reference sources all in one. Perhaps there is just too much information nowadays for any one man (or woman). The fashion for one or two editors to gather a selection of topics and compose a book can be an attractive option but is not of course in any way comprehensive. Though each section is fairly short, this book is comprehensive. It is also evenly balanced, so that while I thought some sections outstanding (e.g. osteoarthritis, back problems), they were not set at the expense of others. The background to some topics is well set out, and there are unusually helpful indications of the basis of a number of laboratory tests (though I'm afraid I didn't think the diagrams helped much).

I enjoyed browsing through this book and tried, with some success, to 'catch it out' over the index. My only criticism is that I would have liked more insight into the particular interests and enthusiasms of the author – it seems to me a monograph can let in a bit more colour.

The book is aimed at medical students (I only wish they would lift their eyes long enough from 'standard books' to be likely to read this), candidates preparing for the MRCP (for them I feel it would need to be shorter and more incisive) but not aimed where I think it ought to be – at all general physicians who have successfully got past the MRCP stage and want to keep abreast of work in specialist field. Those entering rheumatology might also do well to start here.

B MCCONKEY