

Book reviews

Prostaglandins, Leukotrienes and the Immune Response. By J L Ninneman. Pp. 295. £25.00. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. 1988. ISBN 0-521-33483-7.

Regulation of the immune response is second in complexity only to the organisation of the central nervous system, such that attempts to unravel the former, particularly in chronic disease states, are likely to cause overload of the latter. Eicosanoids are but one group of molecules with immunomodulatory effects, and this monograph seeks to pull together the now considerable amount of data in this field. This in itself is a valuable exercise as the original reports are widely distributed within journals and symposia proceedings and are not always readily accessible. The book helps by reproducing many previously published figures as well as providing overviews and commentary. After a (very) brief introduction to the immune system and to eicosanoid chemistry the remaining chapters deal with effects of these compounds on various cell types (monocyte/macrophages, lymphocytes, neutrophils) and their possible role in different areas of immunopathology (malignancy, transplantation, rheumatoid arthritis and autoimmunity, trauma and surgery, allergy). Each area is fully covered in a style which is highly readable, and following up particular points is facilitated by the comprehensive reference list (dated up to 1987) at the end of each chapter. Interestingly, the chapter on rheumatoid arthritis and autoimmunity is the shortest, perhaps reflecting a relative lack of information on this subject. Alternatively, one suspects that rheumatologists, living as they do in a world awash with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, may be taking a rather sanguine view of the part played by prostaglandins in the immune system *in vivo*.

The subject matter of this book may appeal to only a small band of individual purchasers, but libraries serving

departments with interests in mechanisms of immune regulation would find it a useful addition to their shelves.

Bath Institute for Rheumatic Diseases,
Trim Bridge,
Bath BA1 1HD

N D HALL

Year Book of Orthopaedics 1988. Edited by Mark Coventry. Pp. 350. £35.50. Wolfe Medical: London. 1988. ISBN 0-815-11892-9.

Some 400 papers taken from 58 English and French language journals are covered in detail and followed up by comments of a generally high standard in this book. With one or two exceptions the reviewers are all staff surgeons at the Mayo Clinic, and the publication represents the 'journal club' of that particular institution. Parochial references to local practice are generally outweighed by informed comment of researchers actively working in the field.

The book is well and clearly printed, of a convenient size to handle, and spelling mistakes are sufficiently infrequent not to irritate the reader.

This book affords the general orthopaedic surgeon an opportunity to keep up to date in fields in which he is not familiar and with journals that may not be available to him. It represents an excellent and economical use of reading time and is a valuable investment for any orthopaedic library.

Consultant Senior Lecturer
in Orthopaedic Surgery,
Southmead General Hospital,
Bristol

G C BANNISTER