The authors comment as follows:

Mr Dorling's suggestion that the indirect conjugate method using peroxidase should be no less sensitive than the antibody bridge method using PAP appears to be a logical deduction from the papers that he quotes. It is not, however, in accord with our finding that the indirect conjugate method (using peroxidase) was markedly less sensitive than the PAP sequence.

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Book reviews

Hepatology—Research and Clinical Issues. Volume 3, Alcohol and the Liver. Edited by M. M. Fisher and J. G. Rankin. (Pp. 405; £24.89.) New York and London: Plenum Press, 1977.

In May 1976, the Canadian Hepatic Foundation brought together in Toronto a panel of experts for an interdisciplinary appraisal of the current knowledge of the action of alcohol on the liver. The 16 papers given, together with discussions and a general summary, are now published under the present title.

A major part of the symposium was dedicated to the biochemistry, pathology, and immunology of the hepatic events that are initiated by alcohol. These topics were, quite appropriately, put into perspective by an opening contribution on the epidemiology of cirrhosis of the liver and two concluding papers on the history and management of alcoholic liver disease.

The metabolism of alcohol and the effects of alcohol on hepatic metabolism are dealt with in seven parts. They are informative and readable but might have been more rewarding had the authors made up their minds between a review and a research paper. The topics were well chosen, although the readers of this journal will regret the absence of an account of the current thoughts on the clinical biochemistry of alcoholic liver disease. The general discussion raises some important questions connected directly or indirectly with the use of animal tissue preparations and models and the relevance of the results obtained to man. Lieber, Rubin, and Cederbaum give in two sections a comprehensive account of the alcohol-mediated functional derangements of hepatic organelles and the role these may play in the pathogenesis of liver diseases. Readers who are conversant with the literature on alcohol will recognise parts of these reviews and also note the lack of any distinct progress in this field in recent years. Maybe we should give the baboon model a bit more time. The sections on histopathology and immunology will be welcomed even by those without any specialist training in these fields. In the last two articles, attention is given to the history and management of alcoholic liver diseases as if to ensure that researchers do not lose sight of the real problem. They should be

of general interest. The summary of the symposium by Hans Popper is excellent, and his remarks are thought-provoking.

The editors have succeeded admirably in their task and produced a well-balanced and useful book.

J. CHAKRABORTY

Quality Control in Laboratory Medicine. Edited by J. B. Henry and J. L. Giegel. (Pp. xii + 237; illustrated; £21.75.) Tunbridge Wells: Abacus Press, 1977.

This book presents the 22 papers given at a symposium, held in Florida in April 1976, which followed from the series of symposia held in Geneva on quality control in clinical chemistry. It suffers from the lack of a central theme, and, despite the title, there is little on quality control. The subjects covered include the diagnostic uses of enzyme assays in myocardial infarction and vitamin B deficiency, evaluation of enzyme methods and coagulation tests, and the problems of defining reference intervals. Several of the papers are readable and informative, but most of the information is available elsewhere in the literature.

P. M. G. BROUGHTON

Introduction to Biochemistry, 2nd edition. By J. W. Suttie. (Pp. 434; £7.50.) New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977.

This is the second edition of an established textbook for students taking a short introductory course in biochemistry.

It is divided into five parts: the chemistry of biological material; dynamics and energetics of biological systems; energy production in biochemical systems; energy utilisation in biochemical systems; and metabolic control. It retains a traditional approach, emphasising metabolism rather than molecular biology. This is a well-proved way of teaching elementary biochemistry, but it results in occasional passages with a slightly old-fashioned air, perhaps made more noticeable by contrast with the excellent modern illustrations and diagrams.

Personal judgements differ on what should be included and omitted from an elementary textbook, but many would dissent from the author's decision to cover carbohydrate chemistry in such detail and would doubt the value of including items such as osazone formation in a book where prostaglandins have to be dealt with in one paragraph.