Book reviews

The title indicates the major interests of the authors, namely that the fundamental lesion in atherosclerosis is disturbance of a physiologically significant process—the transmural transport of blood components. This is a view that would have pleased Wilens who, in 1951, had treated the aortic wall experimentally as a selective sieve as well as a conducting tube.

There is a good brief description of vascular components; hypertension and associated chemical mediators are treated in detail. Beautiful coloured photomicrographs illustrate the effect of hypoxia on the passage of colloidal iron marker from endothelium to adventitia, and there are several illuminating electronmicrographs. Of particular interest is the stress laid on the production of gaps between endothelial cells followed by subendothelial "oedema". A new permeability tracer is described "Lipofundin -S". This is a researcher's volume, the product of lively, inquiring generous minds; one's own mind often reeels at the flow of ideas, perhaps not always immediately helpful to the reader, but invariably stimulating.


The Falk Foundation sponsors excellent meetings on liver disease and related topics; this volume records the contributions to a Basel symposium of October 1982. The book is well produced, although failure to unify terminology between chapters, especially in the figures, is sometimes confusing—and what about "The audience then contributed thoughtful comments and penetrating questions until the moderator was reluctantly forced to terminate the session"?

The 40 or so chapters are up to date and generally of high quality. They cover hepatic metabolism of lipids, amino acids, proteins, carbohydrates, haem compounds, and certain metals and vitamins in health and disease, with sections on some related metabolic disorders: the volume title is inaccurate. The value of much full symposium publication can be questioned, and most of these contents can be found in standard textbooks or are already otherwise published. However, this book will be of use and interest to most chemical pathologists, and to other pathologists with an academic or service bias towards hepatology.


This excellent book is the report of a Beecham Colloquium which was held in September 1982. Despite its fairly long gestation period, it is packed with information and presents a nicely balanced mixture of clinical and molecular aspects of antiviral therapy. The writing is clear and even—a tribute no doubt to the editors, Sir Charles Stuart-Harris and Dr John Oxford. The editors are also to be congratulated on the transcripts of the discussions which followed the formal presentations. The contributors include most of the British experts on the subjects together with some of the leading American and European workers. Sir Charles' introduction includes an "apology for the slow progress" and, unfortunately, even now in early 1984, the practical uses of antiviral therapy are still very limited. Nevertheless, there is real hope for the future. Among the most notable contributions is HP Lambert's essay on target diseases in which he sets out the possible strategies for controlling virus infections.

The average medical reader may find AG Porter's chapter on gene cloning and the molecular biology of interferon somewhat too biochemical but it is nevertheless a scholarly review of a currently exciting topic. This chapter is nicely complemented by GM Scott's following article on the clinical uses of interferon. Although most current and prospective antiviral drugs are discussed, one surprising omission is ribivirin, which is scarcely mentioned. However, despite this minor criticism I found this an enjoyable and useful book which clinical virologists—and possibly also infectious diseases clinicians—will certainly want to have on their bookshelves.


In this book the author's expressed aim is to illustrate common problems in gastrointestinal pathology so that it may act as a bench reference for the reporting pathologist. A total of 370 illustrations are presented, mostly photomicrographs, and nearly all in colour. Many are excellent but