

Medicine and Books

Pharmacology with few flaws

Lecture Notes on Pharmacology. H F Grundy. (Pp 446; figs; £9.80 paperback.) Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1985.

Most medical undergraduates and many postgraduate membership candidates have had reason to be grateful for Blackwell's *Lecture Notes* series. This, the latest addition to the series, continues the tradition of providing a concise yet comprehensive revision text.

The book is divided unequally into four parts. The first discusses the pharmacokinetic concepts that relate to the absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination of compounds and many of the other factors that influence the destiny of a drug. Although the text is well illustrated, there is a considerable variation of style, from enjoyable prose to telegraphic notation. Little background mathematical knowledge is assumed and the content is largely descriptive.

The fundamentals of pharmacodynamics are covered in the second part. The text is augmented by uncluttered and explicit diagrams. Some of the tables, however, are over inclusive. The first chapters in this section cover the pharmacology of cholinergic and adrenergic neurones. There is an excellent review of receptor pharmacology and a discussion of the role of autocooids. The information is pertinent and clearly written. There are chapters on the physiology of and drug action in the central nervous system, the latter also discussing some of the clinical uses of therapeutic agents. The final chapter on membrane stabilisers is tightly packed with detail.

Part three is devoted to systematic pharmacology and, as throughout the book, contains many cross references. This is the largest section and details the pharmacology of the major organ systems of the body. In addition, there are chapters on vitamins and chemotherapy. On this topic it is obviously difficult not to stray into what, arguably, is the domain of clinical pharmacology.

The final section contains an outline of toxicology and drug development and use. The amount of space allocated to these subjects does not reflect their importance in pharmacology.

I enjoyed reading this book and found it to be informative. Despite the inconsistency of style, the information is logically set out and easy to absorb. The format has been well planned and the illustrations contribute to the detail rather than detract from the text. I was disappointed by the section on pharmacokinetics, however, and would have preferred more mathematical detail. There could also have been an expansion of the debate on environmental and genetic influences on drug action. An important factor in drug metabolism, and often in the development of adverse drug reactions or toxic effects, is the existence of genetic polymorphisms in the general population. Genetic differences in metabolic pathways within the population are of relevance to the prescribing doctor as well as the pharmacological scientist.

The chapter on toxicology was very restricted, yet this is a major part of pharmacology and deserves a higher profile. Most physicians would benefit from a general understanding of the mechanisms of toxicity and most pharmacologists should be aware of *in vivo* and *in vitro* toxicity tests. There is currently a move, both in society and among experimental scientists, towards replacing *in vivo* toxicity testing by appropriate *in vitro* alternatives and this warrants discussion. Correspondingly, the long trek of drug research and development justifies more space. A large amount of time, energy, and money is spent searching for more effective and safer medicines for society.

I recommend this book to all undergraduate medical students, pharmacologists, and physicians who want a concise update of a continually expanding subject. No textbook is a perfect synopsis of the subject, particularly if it is written by someone other than oneself, but this book more than adequately fulfils its remit. It complements its stable companion on clinical pharmacology, and, although it does not replace the more turgid reference textbooks of pharmacology, it is an excellent revision text. The author has compressed a substantial amount of information into a book that may be enjoyably and quickly read. It is superb value for money.

P G BLAIN

Gastroenterology in general practice

Management of Common Diseases in Family Practice. "Gastroenterology." M Lancaster-Smith, C Chapman. Series editors J Fry, M Lancaster-Smith. (Pp 204; figs; £12.95.) MTP Press. 1985.

In 1982 Dr Lancaster-Smith and Mr Ken Williams produced a book, *Problems in Gastroenterology*, published by the same house as this book, and in the main, aimed at more or less the same readership. The text of the new book subdivides the subject matter somewhat differently, but in my view this confers no advantage.

The opening chapters on oesophageal problems are much the same in both books, but better and more clearly presented in the 1982 volume. Then follows three chapters dealing with uncomplicated and complicated peptic ulceration and their surgical management.

In the chapter on uncomplicated ulcer the best part is a flow diagram that elucidates and rationalises the transition from conservative to surgical treatment in the era of H₂ receptor blockade. The chapter on complicated ulcer disease and the chapter on surgical management, while interesting, have limited relevance to the general practitioner except insofar as he may have to manage the long term complications of the various operations that are performed. I think that this subject might have been condensed and included in the general management of peptic ulcer disease. The chapter is enlivened, however, by an excellent flow diagram of the mechanisms of dumping syndromes.

The chapter dealing with acute abdominal pain is one of the best in the book. The authors describe a logical sequence of questions to pose to the patient and highlight those points that enable a differential diagnosis and then a presumptive definitive diagnosis to be made *before* proceeding to examine the patient.

Chronic abdominal pain is not dealt with as crisply as acute pain but is covered comprehensively. It is a pity, and I find it confusing, that the investigations and interpretations of pain due to irritable bowel syndrome are included here rather than in the brief chapter dedicated to the condition.

The chapters on acute and chronic diarrhoea are well presented with enough bacteriology to make investigation of the infectious diarrhoeas an interesting exercise in differential diagnosis. In the section on malabsorption there is a diagram (p 102) summarising the causes of this symptom complex after gastric surgery, and it is one of those instances where one picture is worth any number of words. I was also impressed by the authors' approach to the investigation of patients with malabsorption.

Inflammatory bowel disease is well, if somewhat briefly covered, and is followed by a description of diverticular disease and constipation. This chapter is arguably the most useful to the general practitioner. The chapter on miscellaneous gastrointestinal problems deals with the hoary chestnuts that we all meet with regularity: anorexia, abnormal tongue, bad breath, wind, and so on. This is marvellous for the young doctor fresh from hospital where such mundane subjects are rarely discussed.

"Jaundice and Liver disease" remains in this, as in the previous book, the best chapter, sufficiently detailed to give the reader a clear understanding of the physiology and pathology of the various conditions, but at the same time it is simply and clearly laid out. The appendix is also useful with sections recommending information to be given to patients suffering with a variety of gastrointestinal problems.

In summary, a readable book, but not as good as the authors' previous work, which I think was better value and might, with advantage, have been revised and reissued as a second edition.

A G MARUS

Beyond the high rise flat

Mental Health and the Environment. Ed H Freeman. (Pp 500; figs; £40.) Churchill Livingstone. 1984.

That doctors in general, and psychiatrists in particular, are often poorly acquainted with sociological and anthropological concepts is surprising as there is wide acknowledgement that illness is related to the way in which individuals interact with their surroundings. Clinical experience teaches that aspects of the environment—jobs, housing, and neighbourhood—play a part in the psychiatric illnesses of our patients, not least because the patients tell us that they do. Nevertheless, perhaps because the published work is so extensive and the issues are so big—political rather than individual—most of us do not get beyond nebulous concepts. We are aware that schizophrenia is more common in inner cities and that high rise flats are bad for young families but rarely go much further than that.

That is why this book is so welcome: it brings together in one, admittedly densely packed, volume a wide range of concepts from many disciplines in the sociological and behavioural sciences to consider the relation between mental health and the environment. Although the main focus is on psychiatric illness, other aspects of disturbed behaviour such as criminality and aggression are considered and the broad concept of mental health and ill health is one of the strengths of this book. The problem of definition—when is distress disease?—is not shirked, although it is not allowed to dominate.

The emphasis is on the urban environment: size, density and crowding, noise, housing, criminality, and social pathology, with a particular emphasis on the decaying inner city reflecting the editor's own interest and concern about the decline of Salford. There is a sense of well controlled anger, especially in Dr Freeman's own chapters, notably the section on high rise housing, about the effect of planning decisions by the powerful on the ordinary lives of powerless people.

The book is structured into sections that review the scientific background to the broad concepts, concentrate on specific environmental issues, and provide detailed analysis of individual studies. It ends with a moving chapter about our need for a sense of continuity in our environment.

The picture that emerges is one without absolute answers. Not surprisingly, most chapters conclude that the results of recent research are equivocal. Individual factors, such as density, rate of social change, migration, and noise, seem to be deleterious to mental health, especially if they are combined with other factors both in the environment and in the individual. Evidence for individual variation in vulnerability and sensitivity to outside factors is given, and it is implied that there is an end of the spectrum where mental health is substantially impaired by adverse environmental factors alone. I would have liked to see a section where the evidence that

intrapersonal factors increase vulnerability or offer protection against environmental stress was reviewed; I was also surprised that the working environment was not considered.

I would highly recommend this book to all interested in the social aspects of disease and suggest that it is made mandatory reading for students of architecture and town planning. It destroys some myths—for example, that rates of mental illness are higher in towns than in rural areas—and brings in some stimulating and fresh concepts to the debate, including a reference to the mating habits of the Arctic skua. My only warning is, do not take it away to read on holiday—it's too depressing.

GILLIAN WALDRON

In brief . . .

Many people with backache seek help from osteopaths, and the papers published in *Empirical Approaches to the Validation of Spinal Manipulation*, edited by A A Bueger and P E Greenman (\$34.75; Charles C Thomas) and based on a conference on "Manual medicine" held at Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1983, emphasise that the main thrust of assessment and treatment is manipulation.

The first section on the biomechanics of the back is excellent. A paper by G B G Andersson, drawing heavily on the work of Nachemson, gives up to date views, the emphasis being mainly on the intervertebral disc. The second section is also good, with American figures of the epidemiology of backache and occupational back injuries. (The importance of this will be recognised by anyone entering general practice when they discover the disparity between the little time devoted to teaching medical students about backache compared with its prevalence in practice.) The third section on diagnosis, patient selection, and manipulation is on less certain ground. Back pain is referred and may be associated with the unusual condition of referred tenderness; furthermore, the back seems to be a target area for patients with neuroses. Examination is largely subjective, and objective investigations such as radiculography and scans are often unhelpful. With this amount of potential confusion it is easy to produce systems of examination and aetiological theories that are at best obscure and at worst meaningless. Validation on a personal level rests with the individual therapist who discovers to his gratification, and often amazement, that a simple manipulative procedure results in a sudden and spectacular improvement of the patient's signs and symptoms.

General validation must depend on the results of controlled trials, and this is the subject of the fourth section of the book. Useful chapters here are by D Evans and M S Burke. The latter enumerates the requirements for a clinical trial, and Evans reviews 11 clinical trials held between 1964 and 1981 and tabulates the results. Patient selection, treatment, and trial design are so different, however, that not surprisingly no discernible trend can be detected—except possibly that older patients respond better.

Contributors

P G BLAIN is head of the biomedical sciences section and coordinator of the human toxicology team at the Imperial Chemical Industries Central Toxicology Laboratory, Macclesfield, Cheshire.

A G MARUS is a general practitioner and hospital practitioner in gastroenterology in London.

GILLIAN WALDRON is a consultant in community psychiatry with Tower Hamlets Health Authority, London.

Some new titles

Surgery

Single Surgical Procedures. Vol 22. "A Colour Atlas of Thyroid Lobectomy." N A Matheson. General editor W F Walker. (Pp 96; 165 colour plates; £15.) Wolfe Medical Publications. 1985.

Single Surgical Procedures. Vol 23. "A Colour Atlas of Surgery at the Thoracic Outlet." E W Parry. General editor W F Walker. (Pp 64; 93 colour plates; £14.) Wolfe Medical Publications. 1985.

Single Surgical Procedures. No 25. "A Colour Atlas of External Fixation." C M Court-Brown, S P F Hughes. General editor W F Walker. (Pp 64; 64 figs and colour plates; £14.) Wolfe Medical Publications. 1985.

Single Surgical Procedures. Vol 28. "A Colour Atlas of Modified Radical Mastectomy." D Ralphs. General editor W F Walker. (Pp 64; 111 colour plates; £14.) Wolfe Medical Publications. 1985.

The Surgeon's Guide to Intraocular Lens Implantation. H M Clayman. (Pp 178; figs; £51-85.) SLACK. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

Surgery Annual: 1985. Vol 17. Series editor L M Nyhus. (Pp 400; figs; £73-75.) Appleton-Century-Crofts. Distributed by Prentice-Hall International. 1985.

Trauma and Pregnancy. Ed C E Haycock. (Pp 224; figs; £25.) PSG Publishing Company. Distributed by John Wright and Sons. 1985.

Wound Care. Ed S Westaby. (Pp 216; figs and colour plates; £12-50 paperback.) Heinemann. 1985.

Toxicology

ABC of Poisoning. Part 1—Drugs. J Henry, G Volans. (Pp 82; figs; £5-50, overseas £8-50 (\$11-50) paperback, including postage, airmail overseas. BMA Members £5, overseas £8 (\$10-50), including postage.) British Medical Association. 1985.

Current Issues in Toxicology. "Interpretation and Extrapolation of Chemical and Biological Carcinogenicity Data to Establish Human Safety Standards" and "The Use of Short-Term Tests for Mutagenicity and Carcinogenicity in Chemical Hazard Evaluation." Ed H C Grice. Sponsored by the International Life Sciences Institute. (Pp 207; DM 52 paperback.) Springer-Verlag. 1984.

Tropical medicine

Medical Laboratory Manual for Tropical Countries. Vol II. "Microbiology." M Cheesbrough. (Pp 488; figs and colour plates; £8-95 paperback.) Tropical Health Technology/Butterworth. 1985.

Urology

The Urinary Tract and the Catheter. Infection and Other Problems. N Slade, W A Gillespie. (Pp 138; figs; £17.) John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

The Year Book of Urology 1984. Ed J Y Gillenwater, S S Howards. (Pp 308; figs; £45.) Year Book Medical Publishers. Distributed by Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1984.

Vascular medicine

Handbook of Hypertension. Vol 6. "Epidemiology of Hypertension." Ed C J Bulpitt. Series editors W H Birkenhäger, J L Reid. (Pp 536; figs; \$109-25.) Elsevier Science Publishers. 1985.

Virology

Developments in Molecular Virology. "Molecular components of hepatitis B Virus." M Feitelson. Series editor Y Becker. (Pp 286; figs; £27-95.) Martinus Nijhoff. Distributed by MTP Press. 1985

Symposia and conference proceedings

Acute Respiratory Infections in Childhood. [International Workshop, Sydney, August 1984.] Ed R M Douglas, E Kerby-Eaton. (Pp 210; figs; A\$10 paperback.) Available from Dr R M Douglas, Department of Community Medicine, University of Adelaide, S Australia 50901. 1985.

Advancing Therapy of Cancer IV. [Fourth International Conference, Tucson, Arizona, 21-24 March 1984.] Ed S E Jones, S E Salmon. (Pp 716; figs; £25.) Grune and Stratton. 1984.

Advances in Audiology. Vol 3. "Disorders with Defective Hearing." [Second International Symposium on Audiological Medicine, Sirmione del Garda, Italy, 10-13 April 1983.] Ed V Colletti, S D G Stephens. Series editor M Hoke. (Pp 224; figs; \$98-25.) Karger. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

Advances in Biological Psychiatry. Vol 15. "Neurophysiological Correlates of Mental Disorders." [Fifth International Symposium on Clinical Neurophysiological Aspects of Psychopathological Conditions, Vienna, 9-10 July 1983.] Ed B Saletu, S Perris, D Kemali. Series editors J Mendlewicz, H M van Praag. (Pp 120; figs; \$36-25.) Karger. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

Alternative Immunoassays. [Based on a Symposium at the Institute of Psychiatry, University of London, November 1983.] Ed W P Collins. (Pp 256; figs; £28.) John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

Antibiotics and Chemotherapy. Vol 35. "Neonatal Group B Streptococcal Infections." [Workshop, University of Lund, Sweden, 23-25 August 1983.] Ed K K Christensen, P Christensen, P Ferrieri. Series editors H Schönfeld, F E Hahn. (Pp 360; figs; \$105-25.) Karger. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

Antibiotics and Chemotherapy. Vol 36. "Pseudomonas aeruginosa: New Therapeutic Approaches from Basic Research." [Conference, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, 7-8 June 1984.] Ed D P Speert, R E W Hancock. Series editors H Schönfeld, F E Hahn. (Pp 184; figs; \$63.) Karger. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

Applied Nutrition: II. [British Dietetic Association Study Conference, University of Stirling, 6-10 June 1983.] Ed E C Bateman. (Pp 136; figs; £12 paperback.) John Libbey. 1984.

Atheroma and Thrombosis. [Symposium, London, 11-12 July 1983.] Ed V V Kakkar. (Pp 314; figs; £30.) Pitman Publishing. 1985.

Bibliotheca Haematologica. No 51. "Red Blood Cells as Carriers for Drugs. A Method for Disseminating Chemotherapeutics, Hormones, Enzymes and Other Therapeutic Agents via the Circulatory System." [First International Conference, Bellagio, Italy, 27 February-2 March 1984.] Ed J R DeLoach, U Sprandel. Series editor A Hässig. (Pp 170; figs; \$44-25.) Karger. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

Bibliotheca Nutritio et Dieta. No 35. "Principal Aspects of Clinical Nutrition." [20th Symposium of the Group of European Nutritionists, Baden/bei Wien, 22-24 September 1983.] Ed J C Somogyi, R Wenger. Series editor J C Somogyi. (Pp 140; figs; \$67-75.) Karger. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

Biochemical Society Symposium. No 49. "Molecular Variants of Proteins: Biosynthesis and Clinical Relevance." [Middlesex Hospital Medical School, London, December 1983.] Ed P N Campbell, C F Phelps. (Pp 204; figs; £25.) The Biochemical Society. 1984.

Bone Circulation. [Third International Symposium on Circulation in Bone, Toulouse, 1982.] Ed J Arlet, R P Ficat, D S Hungerford. (Pp 452; figs; £54.) Williams and Wilkins. 1984.

Breast Cancer Management—Are There Grounds for Optimism? [Symposium, Royal College of Physicians, London 24-25 May 1984.] Ed P R Garratt. (Pp 152; figs; price not stated.) Published as a service to medicine by Lederle Laboratories. 1984.

Chemical Safety Regulation and Compliance. [Course held in Cambridge, Mass, 24-25 October 1983.] Ed F Homburger, J K Marquis. (Pp 140; figs; \$49.) Karger. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

Ciba Foundation Symposium. No 110. "The Value of Preventive Medicine." [London, 10-12 April 1984.] Ed D Evered, J Whelan. (Pp 268; figs; £27-95.) Pitman Publishing. 1985.

Ciba Foundation Symposium. No 112. "Microbial Toxins and Diarrhoeal Disease." [Ciba Foundation, London, 10-12 July 1984.] Ed D Evered, J Whelan. (Pp 296; figs; £27-95.) Pitman Publishing. 1985.

Clinical Disorders in Pediatric Nutrition Series. Vol 3. "Vitamin and Mineral Requirements in Preterm Infants." [Symposium, Washington DC, 1984.] Ed R F Tsang. Series editor F Lifshitz. (Pp 232; figs; \$54.) Marcel Dekker. 1985.

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Contribution of Psychology to Programme Development in the WHO Regional Office for Europe. [Report on a Consultation, Cologne, 15-17 May 1984.] WHO. (Pp 22; paperback, price not stated.) World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe. 1985.

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Contributions to Nephrology. Vol 42. "Kidney, Small Proteins and Drugs." [Third International Symposium of Nephrology, Montecatini Terme, Italy, 3-5 May 1983.] Ed C Bianchi, A Bertelli, C G Duarte. Series editors G M Berlyne, S Giovannetti. (Pp 272; figs; \$75.) Karger. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1984.

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Contributions to Nephrology. Vol 46. "Highly Permeable Membranes." [International Symposium, Bad Homburg v. d. Höhe, 24-25 May 1984.] Ed E Streicher, G Seyffart. Series editors G M Berlyne, S Giovannetti. (Pp 196; figs; \$46.) Karger. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

Current Concepts of Infections in Orthopedic Surgery. [11th Annual Course on Infection in Orthopedic Surgery, University of Ottawa, May 1984.] Ed H K Uthoff. (Pp 313; figs; DM 138.) Springer-Verlag. 1985.

The Developing Brain and its Disorders. [Fourth International Symposium on Developmental Disabilities, Tokyo, 3-5 November 1983.] Ed M Arima, Y Suzuki, H Yabuuchi. (Pp 322; figs; \$68-25.) Karger. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

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Diet and Health in Modern Britain. [Seminar of the Historians and Nutritionists, Queen Elizabeth College, University of London.] Ed D J Oddy, D S Miller. (Pp 334; figs; £22-50.) Croom Helm. 1985.

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An Experiment in Advocacy: The Hackney Multi Ethnic Women's Health Project. [Report of a King's Fund/City and Hackney Community Health Council Conference, King's Fund Centre, 4 June 1984.] Ed J Cornwall, P Gordon. (Pp 44; figs; £1-50 paperback, including postage.) Available from King's Fund Centre, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NF. 1984.

Falk Symposium No 40. "Advances in Glucuronide Conjugation." [Titisee, West Germany, 31 May-2 June 1984.] Ed S Matern, K W Bock, W Gerok. (Pp 464; figs; £49.) MTP Press. 1984.

Health Information Systems. [Yves Biraud Seminar, Tufts University European Center, Le Prieuré, Talloires, France, 8-10 September 1982.] Ed P E Leaverton, L Massé. (Pp 220; figs; £43-25.) Praeger. Distributed by Holt-Saunders. 1984.

Hyperthermic Oncology 1984. Vol 1. "Summary Papers." [Fourth International Symposium on Hyperthermic Oncology, Aarhus, Denmark, 2-6 July 1984.] Ed J Overgaard. (Pp 892; figs; £70, Vols 1 and 2 set £95.) Taylor and Francis. 1984.

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IARC Scientific Publications. No 53. "Nickel in the Human Environment." [Joint Symposium held at IARC, Lyon, France, 8-11 March 1983.] Editor-in-Chief F W Sunderman, Jr. (Pp 554; figs; £30.) Oxford University Press for the International Agency for Research on Cancer. 1984.

IARC Scientific Publications. No 56. "Models, Mechanisms and Etiology of Tumour Promotion." [Symposium of the Hungarian Cancer Society and the IARC, Budapest, 16-18 May 1983.] Ed M Börzsönyi, N E Day, K Lapis, H Yamasaki. (Pp 552; figs; £30.) Oxford University Press for the International Agency for Research on Cancer. 1985.

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Infections in Reproductive Health. Vol 1. "Common Infections." [Based on an International Conference on Infections in Reproductive Health, Maui, Hawaii, 1982.] Ed L G Keith, G S Berger, D A Edelman. (Pp 394; figs; £49-95.) MTP Press. 1984.

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Lithium. Current Applications in Science, Medicine, and Technology. [Based on the 35th Southeastern Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society, Charlotte, North Carolina, 9-11 November 1983.] Ed R O Bach. (Pp 442; figs; £92-50.) John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

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MBL Lectures in Biology. Vol 5. "The Visual System." [Symposium in Honor of Edward F MacNichol Jr, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, 2-3 December 1983.] Ed A Fein J S Levine. (Pp 208; figs; £34.) Alan R Liss. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1984.

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Medicine and Sport Science. Vol 19. "High Altitude Deterioration." [International Congress for Mountain Medicine, Chamonix, 22-25 March 1984.] Ed J Rivolier, P Cerretelli, J Foray, P Segantini. Series editors E Jokl, M Hebbelinck. (Pp 244; figs; \$61-75.) Karger. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1985.

Microencapsulation and Artificial Cells. [Fifth International Symposium, Montreal, Canada, 2-3 May 1983.] Ed T M S Chang. (Pp 328; figs; £69-50.) Humana Press. Distributed by John Wiley and Sons. 1984.

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