

Book review

Biochemie: Ein Lehrbuch für Studierende der Medizin, Biologie und Pharmazie: by K. JUNGERMANN AND H. MÖHLER, Springer-Verlag, Berlin, New York, 1980, xii + 714 pages + Subject Index, \$54.90, DM 98.00 (+ \$11.70, DM 19.80, for companion problems, xi + 229 pages), in German.

This is a handsomely executed book, having many colored illustrations, but it should have been named “The Biochemistry of Mammals”, as it covers this area exclusively.

As regards those fields with which this reviewer is most familiar, it was noted that carbohydrate structures are drawn using Haworth ring-depictions, and there is no indication that pyranose–furanose isomerism can exist. Even though all bacteria are covered by a polysaccharide that determines their serological classification, this book, nevertheless, states that “proteins, glycolipids, glycoproteins, but also [!] polysaccharides can be antigenic” (immunogenic?). The authors seem to relegate polysaccharides to a minor immunological role. Surely this concept died in the 1920’s.

There are places wherein the writing leaves the student with an incorrect impression. For example, it is correctly stated that immunoglobulins having differing specificities possess different amino acid sequences, but the authors fail to mention that different immunoglobulins can have the same specificity, although this is certainly true. A statement on page 614 leaves the uninitiated reader with the impression that a normal immune response would be monoclonal. This reviewer finds it strange that there is no mention whatsoever of any work on monoclonal immunoglobulins or hybridomas, two discoveries (respectively, 12 and 5 years old) that have revolutionized biology and genetics.

All in all, the book reads well, is sensibly organized, and offers a good overview for advanced medical students. The inclusion of several chapters on the pathology of relevant processes is innovative and particularly useful.

A companion book containing problems is offered for the student.

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