

*Lymphocyte Stimulation*

by N. R. Ling and J. E. Kay

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xii + 398 pages. Dfl. 110.00; £ 20.00; \$ 42.50

The new addition of Ling and Kay's 'Lymphocyte Stimulation' is an excellent account of present knowledge in this rapidly expanding and often rather confusing field. The authors have obviously taken a great deal of time, and trouble, in revising and updating this second edition. The book is written in a clear and thoroughly readable style, the chapter and section headings are concise and make this an excellent reference book for workers in the field, particularly for the newly initiated.

The first three chapters concentrate upon definition of the lymphocyte and sub-populations thereof. Sub-division is still, to a degree, based upon characteristics such as the presence of specific cell surface receptors, ability to ingest foreign particles, and even charge density; detailed descriptions of the separation techniques based upon these parameters are included. One criticism of this chapter, particularly for those setting up experimental systems for the first time, is the lack of information in diagram form. The clearest and most rapid way of communicating this kind of experimental design is a simple line drawing — and a single diagram can often take the place of several paragraphs.

Chapter four is an extremely useful, though brief, comparison of responses of lymphocytes from various species, to common stimulating agents, and is a salutary reminder that interspecies generalizations are misleading, and that extrapolation of data about responses of one species to those of others, even within the same genus, are not possible in these systems.

Chapter five, a clear and informative description of

morphological changes induced by stimulation might have benefitted from the inclusion of plates, although it was obviously the policy of the authors and publishers to avoid them throughout the book, probably on the grounds of excessive cost. Again, simple line drawings would have added something to clarity — for the beginner at least.

The following six chapters cover a good deal of the available data on stimulation by other agents besides plant and bacterial mitogens, including antigens, immunoglobulins and foreign cells. This section is particularly well referenced and will serve as a very good introduction to the vast, and ever increasing volume of literature in the journals. The last three chapters cover the information available about the mechanisms and biochemistry of lymphocyte stimulation.

One surprising omission is the absence of a table of abbreviations, particularly as the definitions of some of the initials is not given when the abbreviation is first used. This is a minor irritation in an otherwise very well produced book.

It could be argued that a book covering such a very rapidly changing and progressing subject as this, is likely very soon to need revising. This is a valid point, but outweighed I think, by the value of having such a large amount of scattered data clearly presented between two covers.

It is a pity that the book is so expensive.

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