

Aldehyde Adducts in Alcoholism

Edited by M.A. Collins

Alan R. Liss; New York, 1985

xiv + 230 pages. £35.00

This book arose from a valuable round table discussion held in June 1984 as part of an international meeting on biomedical research into alcohol held in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Acetaldehyde has been implicated for several years in the pathogenesis of various aspects of alcohol toxicity and addiction and this book is a useful summary of the state of the art. Although there have been considerable methodological problems it is generally agreed that alcoholics have higher blood, and by implication, tissue acetaldehyde levels than normal subjects after an ethanol load. This probably reflects the well known observation that hepatic ethanol oxidation is increased in alcoholics probably due to induction of the microsomal ethanol-oxidising system. However, acetaldehyde oxidation is reduced due to lower activities of various hepatic aldehyde dehydrogenases. Evidence for adduct formation between acetaldehyde and various proteins in-

cluding haemoglobin is critically reviewed. These latter compounds may form the basis of a useful method for detecting and monitoring alcohol abuse. Adduct formation with encephalins and with biogenic amines with the formation of various isoquinolines, carboline and tryptoline compounds is critically reviewed. These latter compounds are of particular interest as in certain experimental conditions they may induce a 'craving' for ethanol and thus may form the biochemical basis of the addiction in the long-standing abuser. Other adducts of interest include those with glutathione, tetrahydrofolate and with acetaldehyde dehydrogenase itself.

This is a valuable, authoritative book, highly recommended to workers participating in, or entering, this important area of alcoholism research.

T.J. Peters

Advances in Inflammation Research, Volume 10

Edited by F. Russo-Marie, J.M. Mencia-Huerta and M. Chignard

Raven Press; New York, 1985

xxiii + 435 pages. \$60.50

Another conference proceedings, this time of the Third International Congress of Inflammation (Paris 1984, I think, but nowhere mentioned in the book itself). This congress series is not to be confused with the World Congresses on Inflammation (e.g. the second, to be held in Monaco in March 1986). I mention all this to emphasise that there is

a lively trade in Congresses in the field of inflammation, and to query whether they are really justified, despite the scientific, clinical and pharmaceutical importance of the subject.

According to the introductory Preface, the book 'presents the most recent knowledge in the broad field of inflammation', and to this end contains 14