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BOOK REVIEWS

Reactive Metabolites of Oxygen and Nitrogen in Biology and Medicine
by M. B. Grisham
Published by the Medical Intelligence Unit, R.G. Landes Company, Austin

This slim volume of 104 pages is a monograph from a series of over 70 other titles specifically written for "sophisticated clinicians and researchers". It is the publishers aim to have the book available within 90 days of receiving the manuscript from the author. This is admirable in an age when it takes longer to produce the average scientific article or book than a Hollywood blockbuster. However, in this book at least another week of careful proof reading would have paid ample dividends in correcting the obvious typographical, punctuation and grammatical errors with which the text and even the cover, abound! The book focuses principally on inflammation and draws freely from the gastrointestinal literature to illustrate some of the ideas essential to the current culture of Research in Free Radicals. Of the several people I asked to read the book most found something of interest outside their own immediate research experience but were uncomfortable with the way it dealt with their own specialities. For example, those interested in the aetiology of cardiovascular disease, which emphasises the role of LDL (low density lipoprotein), in the pathophysiology of atherosclerosis, would probably be rather confused by the authors ideas concerning VLDL. While these are interesting they are not placed in context for the uninitiated reader or even a "sophisticated clinician". The bibliography covers the areas discussed well and will be very useful for an investigator in search of the seminal papers usually referred to "third hand" in most research articles. Finally, the book is rather expensive (around $90 in the US and $108 elsewhere) and is not good "value for money" compared to other more comprehensive texts which are now available and offer a more comprehensive coverage of the field at a lower cost per page.

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Progress and Perspectives in Chemoprevention of Cancer
Editors G. De Palo, M. Sporn and U. Veronesi
Serono symposia Publications from Raven Press
Volume 79, 1992

This book has been compiled by the editors from the 24 contributions presented at the Ares-Serono Symposium on "Progress and Perspectives in Chemoprevention of Cancer", held at the Instituto Nazionale of Milano, Italy, in March 1991. This symposium was concerned with the "chemoprevention of cancer", which is a relatively new and particularly important branch of medical science. Chemoprevention can be

defined as the use of agents that have the potential to inhibit or reverse the development of cancer. Included in this category of agents is tamoxifen, which is widely used in the treatment and also, more recently, the prevention of breast cancer. Chemoprevention of experimental mammary cancer by tamoxifen is the topic dealt with by Maltoni *et al.* while Veronesi *et al.* discuss the proposed study by the Italian group for cancer chemoprevention of breast cancer by tamoxifen. Jordan and Lababidi consider the use of tamoxifen and other antioestrogens such as toremifene and ICI 164,384 as chemosuppressive agents and Baum and Cuzick consider the ethical and cost aspects of chemopreventive trials, taking the prevention of breast cancer as an example. In addition, Love discusses the use of tamoxifen in hormone replacement therapy, which is particularly interesting as tamoxifen has recently been reported to protect low density lipoprotein (LDL) against oxidative damage, an effect likely to contribute to its cardioprotective benefits.

Moon and Mehta and Soffritti *et al.* discuss the chemoprevention of experimental mammary cancer by retinoids, including Vitamin A (retinyl acetate and palmitate) and N-(4-hydroxyphenyl) retinamide, while the safety and tolerability of retinoids is considered by Costa *et al.* In addition, the use of the synthetic retinoid fenretinide in the chemoprevention of basal cell carcinoma, contralateral breast cancer and oral leukoplakias is dealt with by Nava *et al.*, Veronesi *et al.* and Chiesa *et al.*, respectively. The use of antioxidants such as selenium, ascorbic acid or alpha-tocopherol in the chemoprevention of metachronous adenomas of the large bowel is covered by Bruzzi *et al.*.

The contribution by De Flora *et al.* provides an extremely useful overview of the mechanisms of action of cancer chemopreventive agents, including action at the cell membrane, cytoplasm and nucleus. In addition, the iceberg phenomenon of carcinogenesis is very aptly depicted pictorially, with cancer treatment, a battleship, able to reach only the exposed tip of the iceberg representing cancer, while chemoprevention, a submarine, is able to reach the submerged nine-tenths of the iceberg. The statistical aspects of chemoprevention trials are covered by Marubini and Mariani, while Del Vecchio *et al.* consider data management in chemopreventive trials and Greenwald *et al.* outline the chemoprevention research studies being carried out in the United States.

This extremely relevant and well presented book should be of great help to clinicians and researchers involved in investigating a wide range of cancer related topics and is highly recommended.

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