

demonstrate that the liposome-coated mannose reaches brain tissue, suggesting that the mannose coat assists transport of loaded drug through the blood-brain barrier.

Thus, these studies contribute to the possible treatment of brain infection and offer an effective method for the clinical application of other drugs which cannot normally cross the blood-brain barrier.

### References

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## Book Review

### Prostaglandins and Related Compounds:

Ninth international conference, Florence, Italy

(Advances in Prostaglandin, Thromboxane, and Leukotriene Research. Volume 23)

Edited by Bengt Samuelsson, Peter W. Ramwell, Rodolfo Paoletti, Giancarlo Folco, Elisabeth Granström and Simonetta Nicosia

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Like the curate's egg, this book is excellent in parts. It is a compilation of more than 100 brief papers based on the main programme of lectures at the ninth International Conference on Prostaglandins and Related Compounds (June 1994), which was as usual held in Florence. The publishers and editors have done well to have produced such a weighty tome to this reasonably high standard in the time available. The price that has been paid is a lack of editorial uniformity (or in some cases, apparent total lack of editorial control), and a disappointing variability in appearance of each contribution. I guess this might be because author's manuscripts (disk files?) have been used as supplied and not reformatted.

This familiar series of bright blue books now occupies an important place in the libraries of most institutions involved in the prostaglandins and lipid mediators area, and is regularly used by researchers for updating and casual browsing. However, these books are not usually of much use for detailed study of current research problems or for access to methodologies, for which primary journal articles and dedicated sources are necessary. Neither are they generally suitable for students wishing to study or research a specific topic (coverage is designed for breadth not depth), although there are many articles in the present volume which provide a satisfying entrée, giving some of the key references.

Thus to some extent books like these fall between two

stools. Although valuable to scientists in the field, they are probably not essential. This latest volume is no exception.

However, it contains much interesting material, and many of the authors are to be congratulated on the brevity, accuracy and interest of their short papers. Hot topics within the last few years in this field and which are adequately represented here include molecular, biological, structural and expression studies on several of the important enzymes like 5-lipoxygenase, leukotriene C<sub>4</sub> synthase, prostaglandin H (PGH) synthase/COX-1 and COX-2 (though disappointingly there is nothing meaty on cPLA<sub>2</sub>) as well as receptors for group I PLA<sub>2</sub> and various prostanoids (all reflecting the enormous impact cloning and sequencing techniques have had over the last few years for this field), as well as characterization of many of the relevant genes and the mechanisms whereby they are expressed (lots of attention on growth factors).

At a more practical level, it is interesting to note that hopes for pharmaceutical pay-offs have swung back in favour of prostaglandins (rather neglected in the eighties). This is shown here by work on a PGF<sub>2α</sub> analogue introduced as an ocular hypotensive in glaucoma, PGE<sub>1</sub> in erectile dysfunction (suprisingly longwinded contributions here considering the topic!) and uterine stimulant prostanoid/anti-progestin combinations for early pregnancy termination. There are also several contributions showing that pharmaceutically-speaking the "COX-2 in inflammation should be inhibited" concept is beginning to bear useful fruit.

Taken overall and despite my caveats above, there are many strong points making this a reasonable purchase for aficionados. Perhaps you should add it to the series!

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