
Preface

D. A. J. Tyrrell and H. G. Pereira

Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond. B 1980 **288**, 289

doi: 10.1098/rstb.1980.0003

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Preface

This report presents the written version of an exciting and very well attended Meeting for Discussion. It was particularly appropriate that such a meeting be organized by the Royal Society since it was possible to encompass quite naturally the very wide range of subjects and disciplines which in one way or another add to our understanding of this disease and the viruses that cause it. The clinical reactions and the immunological responses of the host were of necessity omitted but excellent papers were presented on the nucleic acid and polypeptides of the virus, the mechanisms of replication, and the genetics of the viruses. There were also illuminating accounts of the unravelling of the epidemiology of influenza A in humans and in birds and animals. There was also a brief survey of work on live and killed virus vaccines. Virtually all of the papers included substantial new and previously unpublished data, but the speakers aimed also to give a balanced survey of the topic allotted to them, and as they are all internationally acknowledged experts both aspects of their contributions are of value to the general reader.

There were lively discussions and some of the contributions to these have been included. Other lines of research are developing rapidly and will probably be reported soon, for instance the use of DNA cloned in plasmids, and the integration of structural chemistry with the results of studies with monoclonal antibodies. Nevertheless the Royal Society is grateful that so many speakers and participants made possible such a meeting in which the current state of an exciting and rapidly developing field of research was comprehensively and clearly summarized.

November 1979

D. A. J. TYRRELL
H. G. PEREIRA