
Book Reviews

Essex, M.; Todaro, G.; Hausen, H. zur (eds.): **Viruses in Naturally Occurring Cancers**. Book A and B. Cold Spring Harbor Conferences on Cell Proliferation, Vol. 7. Cold Spring Harbor: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory 1980. 706/706-1284 pp., 220/143 figs., 160/134 tabs. Hard bound \$ 150.00.

The etiology of most types of human cancers are still unknown although there does exist some information on an association between the Epstein-Barr virus and two distinct forms of human cancers. More recently an epidemiological association has been found between the primary hepatocellular carcinoma and exposure to hepatitis B virus. Contrary to this, a lot of information has been accumulated on the pathobiology of adeno-, papova-, and retro-virus induced tumors of rodents. New results and insights to these topics were presented at this conference. The major intention was to bring together researchers from different disciplines to analyse recent positions in the search for associations between viruses and naturally occurring cancers. More than 200 participants discussed nearly 100 papers and topics ranged from molecular biology and genetics to epidemiology and clinical oncology.

The papers are grouped into 12 sections: human herpesviruses, animal herpesviruses, papilloma viruses, polyoma and other small DNA viruses, hepatitis B virus, avian retroviruses, bovine and ovine retroviruses, murine retroviruses, feline retroviruses, primate retroviruses, mammary tumor viruses, as well as regulatory factors on the connection between virus and cancer. The papers are completed by instructive tables, figures, and selected references. The contributions are all of a high professional standard.

On the basis of careful analysis the participants verified the hypothesis on the virus etiology of many naturally occurring cancers. Now, as before, the question is open as to whether viruses are to be considered risk factors in human cancers. Cancer causation seems to be a multifactorial illness and further it is necessary to study the regulation of cell proliferation and the relationship between the virus on the one hand and other carcinogenic agents on the other. The papers offer an abundance of information on viruses in naturally occurring cancers and definitely promote the worldwide discussion of this issue. This current conference volume represents an important source of information for scientists interested in the cancer problem.

H. Stäber, Berlin

Miller, J.H.; Reznikoff, W.S.: **The Operon**. Cold Spring Harbor: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory 1980. 469 pp., 45 figs., 34 tabs. Hard bound \$ 55.20.

This book is a paperback reprint of an earlier hardback edition containing critical reviews around the topic 'The Operon'. The original volume is based on the proceedings of a meeting on this topic at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in July, 1976. As it happened, Monod died in May, 1976, and so the volume is dedicated to this memory. Appropriately half the present volume deals with many aspects of this Nobel Prize winning '*lac* Operon' concept following an 'In Memoriam' chapter by Melvin Cohn, and a chapter by Beckwith on the methods and tools used for genetic analysis of the *lac* operon.

The second half of the volume presents analyses of other bacterial regulatory systems, including the tryptophan, *hut*, *ara* and other regulatory regions. Because four years have elapsed since the publication of the hardback first edition, the editors decided to include three reprints of leading papers dealing with an aspect of gene regulation not covered in 1976 – that of attenuation. The three papers are the original ones proposing the current model for attenuation and are presented as an appendix to the paperback edition.

The paperback volume makes available at a more reasonable price (compared with the hardback edition) an authoritative text suitable for students and scientists on the operon in all its aspects. The 'In Memoriam' chapter by Cohn would be particularly interesting to students in giving them a 'personalised' view of the development of an important biochemical concept, containing as it does 'behind the scenes' insights into the role played by all those around Monod in the formulation of the operon theory and the concept of allosteric interactions. The book then would be an important addition to the library of any student or scientist.

J.F. Jackson, Glen Osmond