

# Reviews of Recent Books



**Metabolism of Lipids.** *British Medical Bulletin*, vol. 14, No. 3, September, 1958. The British Council, London, pp. 197-278, \$3.25.

Rapid progress in a field—or at any rate, rapid accumulation of data—calls for a symposium. *Metabolism of Lipids*, which is the subject of the symposium reported in a recent issue of *British Medical Bulletin*, stands especially in need of review, since in recent years the volume of research activity has risen sharply under the stimuli of new techniques and abundant money given to fight arteriosclerosis.

The papers deal with a wide range of topics. For the chemists there are detailed and rather specialized accounts of current work on some aspects of lipogenesis; for the physiologist, discussions of fat absorption and transport and of hormonal control. Clinicians will find a number of sections of practical interest, notably Frazer's discussion of steatorrhea in relation to gluten sensitivity, and the papers on essential fatty acid deficiency by James and Lovelock, and by Sinclair.

Bronte-Stewart's discussion of diet, blood lipid, and heart disease makes the important point (sometimes ignored by clinical enthusiasts) that all the well-controlled clinical studies to date have been concerned with the relation between diet and concentration of blood lipid. As a result of much work in different laboratories it is now clearly established that the composition and amount of dietary fat can influence the concentration of various lipid fractions in the blood. It is tempting to proceed from this result to the conclusion that dietary fat causes coronary artery disease. Epidemiologic studies and animal work do give indirect support to this hypothesis, but the practical nutritionist must remember that the link between diet and disease is at present a working hypothesis, "founded more on assumption than on fact" (p. 251). All will agree with the further conclusion that the problem is of capital importance, deserving vigorous study.

The chief limitations of the symposium are simply those inherent in any meeting in which active investigators report on their own fields of interest. Such a collection of papers does not provide anything like a comprehensive review of the various topics listed, and in some cases the reports fail to give enough background material to make them accessible to the non-expert. But these, after all, are the objectives of textbooks and other kinds of general review. Those of us—chemist, physiologist, and clinician—who are concerned with some aspect of this large subject, and who look with dismay at the volume of periodical literature, will profit

from the issue and be grateful to the distinguished contributors for sharing with us their working hypothesis.

VINCENT P. DOLE

**Advances in Clinical Chemistry**, vol. 1, edited by H. Sobotka and C. P. Stewart. Academic Press Inc., New York, 1958, pp. 398, \$12.00.

Here is a book that will be welcomed by clinical chemists, clinicians, and workers in related fields. The aim in this "Advances" series is to produce readable accounts of selected important developments, of their roots in the allied fundamental disciplines, and of their impact upon the progress of medical science. The articles are written by experts who are actually working in the field they describe. This is not merely a methods book. The various methods are critically presented, the details being fully discussed. In addition to the clinical application, interpretation of the methods is provided, and the metabolic and pathologic aspects of the subjects are expertly reviewed. The bibliography appended to each chapter not only serves to document the author's statements but also refers the reader to original publications for full details or other viewpoints and opinions.

In Volume 1 the subjects presented are plasma iron, the assessment of the tubular function of the kidneys, protein-bound iodine, blood plasma levels of radioactive iodine-131 in the diagnosis of hyperthyroidism, determination of individual adrenocortical steroids, the 5-hydroxyindoles, paper electrophoresis of proteins and protein-bound substances in clinical investigations, composition of the body fluids in childhood, and the clinical significance of alterations in transaminase activities of serum and other body fluids.

O. M. HELMER

**Care of the Premature Infant**, by Evelyn C. Lundeen and Ralph H. Kundstadter. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1958, pp. 367, \$8.00.

This book serves essentially as a nursing text with a synoptic review of medical aspects in the care of the premature infant. It represents a modest revision of *The Premature Infant* by Julius H. Hess, M.D., and Miss Lundeen, published in 1949.

Although rich in valuable practical detail and reported experience, this book contains much that is archaic, ritualistic, and tradition-bound, and is therefore somewhat disappointing as a text for medical students or physicians. From the point of view of

nurses with special interest in the premature infant, the book contains excellent descriptions in exact and extensive detail of nursing routines, technique, and procedures used at the Hortense Schoen Joseph Premature Infant Station at Michael Reese Hospital, Chicago. Equipment, organization, and administration of the nursery staff and teaching curriculum, records, follow-up care, etc., are thoroughly covered. Principles of feeding and feeding techniques are well described, particularly in regard to the use of breast milk.

The chapter on therapeutic procedures covers a variety of subjects. The potential toxicity of oxygen is inadequately emphasized, although mention is made of monitoring oxygen saturation in incubators. Recent improvements in intravenous technique, such as the use of the Gardner-Murphy needle, are not included, although the use of the mustard bath is described. The method described for artificial respiration is specifically discouraged by Committee on the Fetus and Newborn of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The discussion of use of antibiotics is a new chapter and consists of a review of the preparations available. Throughout the book, the problem of staphylococcal and *E. coli* infections is barely, and indirectly, touched upon. The use of aseptic technique receives excellent description and emphasis, however.

The section "Pathologic Conditions and Their Management" is quite inclusive in scope. Although the subject of erythroblastosis fetalis is discussed in detail, virtually nothing is said of the special problems which attend the premature infant with this disorder. Liver extract is recommended in the treatment of anemia. The management of diarrhea is described in general terms.

Perhaps the best features of the book are the excellent descriptions of the home and follow-up care programs. The team and community approach to the total premature care are emphasized and detailed, including the Chicago Plan.

The statistical analyses provide valuable information. Of particular interest is a developmental follow-up study of premature infants whose birth weights were 1250 g or less, with special reference to those who have attained age 18 years or older. T. C. PANOS

**Vitamins and Hormones: Advances in Research and Applications, Volume XVI**, edited by Robert S. Harris, G. F. Harrison, and Kenneth V. Thimann. Academic Press Inc., New York, 1958, pp. 374, \$11.60.

The sixteenth annual volume of this series of reviews contains the high quality readers have learned to expect. Nutrition is well represented by Geiman's "Nutritional Effects of Parasitic Infections and Disease," Lutwak-Mann's "Dependence of Gonadal Function upon Vitamins and Other Nutritional Factors," and Snell's "Chemical Structure in Relation to Biological Activities of Vitamin B<sub>6</sub>." Hormonal aspects of coronary artery disease, the physiology of secretion, and the chemistry and physiology of thyroid-stimulating hor-

mone and synthetic derivatives of corticoids are also discussed. A particular valuable article is Behrens and Bromer's review of glucagon.

Special mention should be made of the article by Felch, Sinisterra, VanItallie, and Stare on vitamins and other nutrients in cardiovascular disease. These authors take the stand that the popular epidemiologic "evidence" linking total fat intake to atherosclerosis is inadequate. In addition they believe that the concept of fatty acid imbalance producing hypercholesteremia has not been shown to be applicable to "conditions of ordinary everyday life." Most workers will agree with them that the relationship between hypercholesteremia and human atherosclerosis has not been conclusively proved to be one of cause and effect. This review of a vital subject is a well-balanced critical appraisal of a field in which feelings are strong but evidence weak.

Again, the reader should thank the authors and editors for their service in preparing these lucid and useful reviews. S. O. W.

**Essential Fatty Acids**, edited by H. M. Sinclair. Academic Press Inc., New York, 1958, pp. 268, \$9.50.

This book is the Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Biochemical Problems of Lipids. It has the familiar advantages and disadvantages of this kind of publication. It has been well edited. The papers are succinctly given and the transcripts of the discussions in most places have been cut to reasonable size and germane topics. A total of 37 papers are included, covering recent work in the chemical aspects, absorption and distribution, and biochemical functions of fatty acids. The concluding section is a general discussion of essential fatty acids.

The papers vary considerably in the detail with which they are presented, extent of discussion, completeness of coverage, etc. The principal value of the book is that it provides a rather broad coverage of recent research activities and advances in the broad field of the chemistry and metabolism of fats with emphasis upon essential fatty acids and atherosclerosis. Those who are primarily clinicians or biochemists will probably learn most from the reports of the chemists and vice versa. The title should not lead one to believe, of course, that this is a monograph on the essential fatty acids. D. MARK HEGSTED

**Remedies and Rackets: The Truth about Patent Medicines Today**, by James Cook. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1958, pp. 237, \$3.75.

This "exposé" was written by a newspaper man and is said to be "essentially a book of facts" with much of its substance drawn from documents of the Food and Drug Administration, Post Office Department Fraud Division, F. T. C., etc. Be that as it may, the book is an obvious attempt at sensationalism. Titles such as "Vitamins and Voodoo" and "The Truth about Drug Prices" will indicate the razzle-dazzle approach. Much is left unsaid or is implied by innuendo. This is re-



flected in the author's attack against reputable pharmaceutical companies. He is on safer ground when he attacks the rejuvenating quackeries, the nonsensical nostrums, and the false claims of so-called reducing remedies. It is unfortunate that the author could not distinguish between the true, the half-true, and the untrue. The book cannot be recommended.

S. O. W.

**Nutrition and Diet Therapy for Practical Nurses**, by Lillian Mowry. C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1958, pp. 165, \$2.50.

The author of this little book is a hospital dietitian, who is aware of the type of questions which practical nurses are asked concerning food. The book is an effort to present, in understandable language, the knowledge of nutrition and diet therapy in relation to the total care of the patient.

The book is divided into two sections. Chapter 1 in the first section explains the importance of a balanced diet. The following chapters discuss carbohydrates, protein, fat, energy requirements, minerals and vitamins, digestion, planning menus for the family, and sanitation. The use of the basic four in translating the recommended allowances over into the daily needs brings the book up to date.

The second section, covering diet therapy, may easily be understood by a practical nurse. An attempt is made to simplify all terminology. This section if well covered by the instructor should give the student an appreciation of the importance of diet restrictions ordered by the physician. The diet for the diabetic is simplified by the use of exchanges. With good instruction the student should be able to calculate and manage the diet with confidence. Low-sodium diets, which are so often mismanaged from lack of understanding and confusion because of terminology, are carefully outlined to include the various levels of sodium intake. This is done very simply and should be followed with ease by the student.

Other chapters include routine hospital diets, modifications in individual constituents such as high caloric diets, high-protein, low-protein, low-fat, and minimum-fat diets, obesity, underweight, modifications in consistency, as diets in ulcer management, and allergy.

Long tables of food values have been omitted and in their place a valuable list of common foods are given in their household measures with their corresponding caloric value. A very valuable glossary of terms used in nutrition and diet therapy is given at the end of the book.

The reviewer believes that the value of the book will depend on the ability of the instructor who uses it. The suggestions for additional study given at the end of every chapter are excellent, and if used should stimulate the interest of the nurse. References used are from reliable sources. More emphasis could have been given to the description of the regular soft, mechanical soft, medical liquid, and surgical liquid diets (p. 89). The answers to some of the questions at the end of that chapter can only be found by referring to the references listed.

The author has done well in gathering a great deal of information together in a small, easily read book without sacrificing important things. It comes at a time when there is a great need for this book.

SR. MAUDE BEHRMAN

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

Books received for review by THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION are acknowledged in this column. As far as practicable, those of special interest are selected, as space permits, for a more extensive review.

*Eat Well and Stay Well*, by Ancel and Margaret Keys, Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York, 1959, pp. 359, \$3.95.

*Shaker Recipes for Cooks and Homemakers*, by William Lawrence Lassiter, Greenwich Book Publishers, New York, 1959, pp. 302, \$4.50.

*Diseases of Laboratory Primates*, by Theodore C. Ruch, W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1959, pp. 600, \$7.50.

*Gift Book of Personal Ideas*, by Mary Mountain Scott, Greenwich Book Publishers, New York, 1959, pp. 39, \$2.50.

*Diseases of Metabolism: Detailed Methods of Diagnosis and Treatment*, edited by Garfield G. Duncan, W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1959, pp. 1104, \$18.50.

*Overfed but Undernourished: Nutritional Aspects of Health and Disease*, by H. Curtis Wood, Jr., Exposition Press, New York, 1959, pp. 95, \$2.50.

*Ciba Foundation Symposium on Biosynthesis of Terpenes and Sterols*, edited by G. E. W. Wolstenholme and Cecilia M. O'Connor, Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1959, pp. 311, \$8.75.

