ABRAHAMSSON S., PASCHER I. (Eds): *Structure of biological membranes* - Plenum Publishing Corporation, New York, 1977, 580 pp. - US $ 59.40.

The structure and biological functions of the membranes were the subject of the 34th Nobel Foundation Symposium which was held at Skövde, Sweden, in the summer of 1976. The present volume contains the contributions of more than 50 researchers from every country.

S. MARIGO

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NOSEDA G., LEWIS B., PAOLETTI R. (Eds): *Diet and drugs in atherosclerosis* - Raven Press, New York, 1980 - XIX-347 pp. - US $ 35.36.

In many industrialized countries, coronary heart disease, the most dramatic manifestation of atherosclerosis, is among the most common causes of death. Small wonder then that its prevention by controlling known or suspected risk factors takes first place in current medical research. The European Atherosclerosis Group met at Lugano in September 1979 to discuss dietary measures apt to combat one of the risk factors, i.e. plasma lipid disorders, and failing these, the use of drugs intended to serve the same purpose.

In his opening lecture, B. Lewis summarized present ideas on the respective roles of LDL and HDL in the pathogenesis of atherosclerosis, coming to the conclusion that there is by now strong evidence, though not conclusive proof, that reducing serum LDL levels lowers the risk of atherosclerosis and may even lead to its regression, whereas the protective role of HDL is less firmly established.

The role of dietary protein in atherogenesis was illustrated by D. Kritchevsky. Other dietary factors, e.g. fat loading and the role of L-carnitine, effect of whey feeding, formed the subject of reports on experimental studies by Maccari, Ramacci and Angelucci, and Stähelin and the Bâle group, respectively.

When prescribing a diet and judging its effect, the physician needs to know whether the patient complies with his instructions. A method of ascertaining this has been worked out by the workers of the Rome Coronary Prevention Project; it consists in the gas chromatographic analysis of the plasma and erythrocyte fatty acid patterns by which it is possible to distinguish compliant from non-compliant subjects, as well as good from poor responders. Only the compliant poor responders should be submitted to drug treatment. Another useful suggestion for dietary supervision was put forward by the Trieste group, consisting in computerized dietary analysis.

A study on two different lipid-lowering diets, one for hypercholesterolemia and one for hypertriglyceridemia, was descibed by Mancini and co-workers, while the influence of various diets on type V hyperlipoproteinemia was the subject of a report by Kostner et al. The effect of a soybean protein diet on serum lipids, plasma glucagon and insulin was discussed by Noseda and Fragiacomo. Several other groups reported on studies of lipoproteins and apoproteins in obese subjects, (Avogaro et al.), on HDL-cholesterol levels and coronary alterations (Mantero et al.). Descovich and co-workers reported on a 6-year population study at Brisighella. HDL_2 and HDL_3 variations during the postprandial phase in humans was the subject of a report by the Padua group (Fellin, Baggio, Baiocchi, Martini, Baldo, Manzato and Crepaldi), and a study on vascular prostacyclin synthesis, platelet sensitivity, plasma factors and platelet function in patients with peripheral occlusive arteriopathy with and without diabetes mellitus was presented by Sinzinger, Kaliman, Klein and Silberbauer.

The remainder of the proceedings was devoted to papers on a variety of lipid-lowering agents (procetofen, biguanides, lipofundin, bezafibrate, etc.) while the whole of the second part of the volume is taken up by papers dealing with a new hypercholesterolemic drug, probucol (4,4'-(isopropylidenedithio)bis(2,6-di-t-butylphenol).

G. URBINATI

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SUTHERLAND H. W., STOWERS J. M. (Eds): *Carbohydrate metabolism in pregnancy and the newborn* - Springer-Verlag, Berlin-Heidelberg-New York, 1979, XIV-558 pp. - DM 64.00.

The 2nd Aberdeen Colloquium on Carbohydrate Metabolism in Pregnancy and the Newborn followed five years after the first, and the speakers on this second occasion, whose reports are presented in this book, had many new aspects to discuss which had not been touched upon by the 1973 colloquium.

If the days are passed when keeping the babies of diabetic mothers alive was a difficult problem to solve, now the aim must be to ensure the good health of these babies. An aspect touched upon by most of the speakers was the question of assessing fetal growth, an aim that still eludes modern obstetric research.

As a basis for the discussion, a first group of papers dealt with the realignments of metabolism during pregnancy in normal and diabetic mothers, placental structure, function and blood flow, and the endocrine pancreas.

These chapters are followed by those on pathological features of the fetuses of diabetic mothers (macrosomia and other fetal abnormalities), and by several contributions on fetal monitoring.

The last three groups of papers are concerned with maternal diabetes, symptomatic as well as asymptomatic, and its management, and with maternal weight and nutrition.

Those whose task it is to assist diabetic women during pregnancy and to safeguard their health and that of their offspring will find much helpful information in this book and one might even say that no one wanting to fulfill this task conscientiously can afford to miss consulting this book.

G. URBINATI

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WALDHÄUSL W. K. (Ed.): *Diabetes* - Excerpta Medica, Amsterdam-Oxford-Princeton, 1980, XX-865 pp. - US $ 153.75.

The 10th Congress of the International Diabetes Federation was convened in the splendid setting of the Vienna Hofburg, on September 9-14, 1979. As is customary, the most outstanding diabetologists from all over the world gathered for this occasion to present their latest findings and exchange views as well as making plans for future research.

After the presidential address by R. Luft on 'The state of the federation', S. J. H. Ashcroft delivered the Minkowski lecture on 'Glucoreceptor mechanism and the control of insulin release and biosynthesis', and one finds with regret that the present volume contains only a half-page summary of this landmark in diabetes research.

W. K. Waldhäusl gave the Eppinger lecture: 'Treatment of diabetes mellitus. Pathophysiological aspects and the state of the art'. This was followed by the Houssay lecture on 'Protein glycosylation', by L. F. Leloir, by the Claude Bernard lecture on 'Diabetes: the genetic connections', by D. A. Pyke (abridged version), and by the Jacobaeus lecture on 'Structures of the genes encoding human and rat pre-proinsulins', by H. M. Goodman and his group.

The remainder of the proceedings was taken up by 24 panel sessions, ranging over every aspect of basic and clinical diabetes research and concerning subjects of immediate clinical interest such as the one on oral antidiabetic agents, and treatment of metabolic derangements in diabetic coma, as well as mainly theoretical ones such as islet hormone chemistry, biosynthesis and gene studies.

G. URBINATI