Book Reviews

Hormones in Blood (Third Edition, Volumes 1 and 2)
C. H. GRAY and V. H. T. JAMES (Editors)
Academic Press, London, 1979, Volume 1, pp. 707, £37.50,
Volume 2, pp. 463, £27.50

The aim of the Third Edition, which is now a three-volume work,
is to provide an authoritative and comprehensive account of
hormones in blood. The method used is a series of chapters each
containing descriptions of the physical and chemical properties
of the hormone, its structure(s), biosyntheses, biological func-
tions, its secretion into and removal from blood, and then
uptake, metabolism and excretion. A critical account of methods
of assay in blood is followed by normal or 'reference values'
and the effects of physiological and pathological processes.
Some secondary effects of general disease are also considered.
This outline of the general framework of the three-volume work
shows the scope of these reference books, which cover a large
part of endocrinology with the emphasis on biochemistry: events
in cells and changes in extracellular body fluids other than blood
are described, despite the title. The emphasis is on the whole
animal and mainly on man and laboratory animals.

In their Preface the Editors admit that 'endocrinology has
reached a stage for taking stock of its position'. These volumes
are an extensive and good stocktaking exercise by 36 authors;
despite this, the chapters are relatively consistent. Much detailed
criticism of factual content or even approach cannot, however,
be generalized. An account of the contents can allow many
people to decide whether these books will be useful to them;
others may welcome the help of a reviewer's opinion.
The large number of specific topics treated by this approach
are accurately indicated by the chapter titles. The contents of
Volume 1 are: 'Hypothalamic Releasing and Inhibiting Hor-
mones and Factors' (A. Arimura & A. V. Schally); 'Insulin'
(U. A. Parman); 'Glucagon' (P. J. Lefebvre & A. V. Luyckx);
'Growth Hormone' (P. H. Sonksen & T. E. T. West);
Somatomedins' (Kerstin Hall & Linda Fryklund); 'Prolactin'
(S. Franks); 'Human Placentals Lactogen' (T. Chard);
'Human Chorionic Gonadotrophin' (K. D. Bagshawe, F. Searle & M.
Wass); 'Gonadotrophin' (W. R. Butt); 'Erythropoietin (P.
Mary Cotes & D. E. Gueret Wardle); 'Pituitary Thyroid-
stimulating Hormone and Other Thyroid-stimulating Sub-
stances' (P. G. Condliffe & B. D. Weintraub); and 'The
iodine-containing Hormones' (J. Robbins & J. E. Rall). The
contents of Volume 2 are: 'Parathyroid Hormone' (G. N.
Hendy, S. E. Papapoulos, I. G. Lewin & J. L. H. O'Riordan);
'Vitamin D' (S. E. Papapoulos, I. G. Lewin, T. L. Clemens,
G. N. Hendy & J. L. H. O'Riordan); 'Calcitonin' (L. J. Defos);
'The Catecholamines: Adrenaline; Noradrenaline; Dopamine'
(B. A. Callingham & Margery A. Barrand); 'Serotonin' (G. A.
Smythe); 'Prostaglandins and Related Compounds' (J. A.
Salmon & R. J. Flower); 'Gastro-intestinal Hormones 1:
Pancreatric Polypeptide, Motilin, Gastric Inhibitory Peptide,
Neurotensin, Secretin, Gastrin, Cholecystokinin, Pancreatic
Polypeptide, Motilin, Gastric Inhibitory Peptide, Neurotensin,
Secretin, Cholecystokinin); 'Gastro-intestinal Hormones 2:
Calcitonin' (L. J. Deftos); 'Gastro-intestinal Hormones 3:
Calcitonin' (L. J. Deftos); 'Calcitonin' (L. J. Deftos); and

For whom might the 1100 pages in these Volumes be most
useful? The laboratory-based endocrinologist will certainly
welcome them as a detailed series of reviews that are usually fair
and quickly. Clinical biochemists without a special interest
in endocrinology could sometimes be frustrated by the
extensive treatment, but for those with some existing framework
of knowledge, these volumes are a great pleasure. The research
worker in areas other than endocrinology and possibly the
university teacher wishing to acquire the detailed insight
provided could find these volumes useful. For those biochemists
concerned purely with intracellular events they provide a
broader perspective.

These volumes are well printed and bound: they would be
valuable additions to the libraries of those universities, research
institutes and specialized diagnostic laboratories with some
direct or indirect interest in endocrinology. The work of the
Editors and of the Authors should save much time for all those
who use these rewarding books.

R. A. HARKNESS

Renal Calculus

LESLIE N. PYRAH
Springer, Berlin, 1979, pp. 370, $49.00

This book presents the unique breadth and depth of Leslie
Pyrah's experience in the diagnosis and treatment of stone
disease. Wearing my clinician's hat, I welcome it without
reservation. It deals succinctly with the clinical problems that
stones in the urinary tract may present, based upon both
personal experience and a lucid review of the literature. Clearly,
as a single-handed effort, the task must have been enormous,
and herein lies one of the book's few faults: the review of the
literature stops short at 1976, or even 1975 in some chapters,
variably because of the time taken to revise the text and
proofs. Whilst not all that is new is necessarily good, some
notable omissions arise. Particularly sad for the biochemist is
the lack of any mention of the 1976 Urolithiasis Research
Meeting in Davos, although the previous meeting in Madrid in
1972 is mentioned frequently. Wearing a biochemical hat, also, I
find there is less to enthuse over. Ideas in the physical chemistry
of calcium stone formation have been advanced recently,
notably by the Medical Research Council Mineral Metabolism
Research Unit in Pyrah's city of Leeds, and much is missing
here. The biochemistry of oxalosis is summarized only briefly,
and that of purine metabolism and uric acid formation only
touched upon: 2,8-dihydroxyadenine stones (probably as