

*Interferon 2, 1980*

Ion Gresser (editor)

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This is the 1980 volume of a series started in 1979 as a forum on interferon for all disciplines. According to the editors, the focus of the series is primarily on position papers by international experts and the style is personal and informal.

Only the contribution of Ernst Knight on the purification and characterization of interferon meets these criteria. His paper is a nice mixture of factual information and personal experience gained during his long struggle to purify HuIFN-beta.

The review of Joyce Taylor-Papadimitriou on the effects of interferon on cell growth and function is excellent. It is the first comprehensive treatise on this subject and is clearly written. It is also the first serious attempt to explain the mode of action of the anticellular effect of interferon, and this paper may well serve as a reference for years to come.

The paper of Derek Burke on the type I human interferon gene system attempts to resolve the differences in the chromosomal location of interferon genes reported by several groups. He also gives interesting data on the intracellular control of interferon production.

Norman Finter and Karl Fantes report on the purity and safety of interferon prepared from Namalva cells. These cells harbour DNA of the Epstein-Barr virus. EB virus is potentially oncogenic in man and products of these cells are regarded by some as unsuitable for application in man. The authors defend the safety of their interferon with skill.

Stanley Cohen and Perlingi Bigazzi write on lymphokines, cytokines and interferon. The writers are clearly not deeply engaged in interferon research, and the interferon data they refer to are not always relevant and up to date. They fail to comment on the relationships between interferon, lymphokines and cytokines. This is a missed opportunity, for the topic is an interesting one – certainly now that the interest in immune interferons is growing.

The book also contains the report of the Committee on nomenclature. This report has already appeared in too many journals and it is certainly superfluous to also have it in this book.

Despite these minor criticisms, *Interferon 2, 1980*, is a good book. It is recommended to all interested in and/or actively engaged in research on the subject.