



## Book review

*Glycoimmunology 2: Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology, vol. 435*

Edited by John S. Axford, published by Plenum Press, New York and London, 1997, 284 pp., ISBN 0-306-45777-6, Price \$95.00 (US and Canada)/\$114.00 (elsewhere)

This book summarizes the contributions to the 4th Jenner International Glycoimmunology Meeting held in Loutraki, Greece, in late 1996; Glycoimmunology 1, published in 1995, resulted from the 3rd meeting held in 1994 in Tuscany, Italy. Almost half the chapters in the current volume have been written by contributors to the first volume and, while some topics are different, many are updates of previous contributions. The first book employed a consistent style for each chapter. However, this is lacking in the present book; chapters differ in typeface, line spacing, style of references and so forth, causing irritation. Another source of irritation is the series of misspellings (I am sure the Wellcome Trust would not be impressed to find an Oxford group unable to spell their name!), bad grammar, poor English, and worst of all, incorrect abbreviations (for example, glu instead of Glc).

The current book, unlike its predecessor, is divided into various subsections; while some of these are meaningful, others clearly are not. For example, the first three chapters are grouped as 'Glycobiology: The Basics', but the opening chapter by van den Eijnden et al., while an interesting update on the biosynthesis of *N*-acetylglucosamine building blocks, could not be termed 'basic'. Neither would I classify the following chapter by Schachter et al., on defective glycosyltrans-

ferases (the longest in the book including over 100 Refs.) or the chapter by Homans et al. on the use of NMR to investigate carbohydrate-protein interactions as 'basic'. Surely, the Schachter chapter would have fitted in more sensibly in the section on 'Glycosylation and Disease', while the Homans chapter could have been included in the section on 'Oligosaccharides and Protein Recognition'.

The 25 chapters of this book cover a wide spectrum of carbohydrate science, ranging from the use of combinatorial chemistry for the synthesis of oligosaccharides and glycomimetic libraries (Wang and Hindsgaul) to a chapter by Izycki et al., entitled 'Development of double copy dicistronic retroviral vectors for transfer and expression of glycosyltransferase genes'. In between there are many chapters more directly related to glycoimmunology, such as that by van Dijk et al. on the 'Occurrence and possible function of inflammation-induced expression of sialyl Lewis<sup>x</sup> on acute phase proteins' and 'A longitudinal study of glycosylation of a human IgG3 paraprotein in a patient with multiple myeloma' by Farooq et al.

However, one gets the impression that some of these articles are only peripherally related to the title of the book, since no effort has been made, either in a preface or in the introduction to each chapter, to place the without-doubt excellent science in the overall context of glycoimmunology. Among the exciting pieces of work is the chapter by Sutton et al., on the first crystal-structure analysis of a complex between the autoantibody and its autoantigens. In addition,

polysaccharides are covered in two timely articles, one by Moxon et al., on LPS candidate vaccines and another by Feldman et al., on molecular mimicry.

This book, containing a wealth of excellent science, is clearly aimed at the initiated. I humbly suggest that future books be edited with a view to the wider audience that this

important and exciting field of research deserves.

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