Book review

Carbohydrate Modifications in Antisense Research edited by Y.S. Sanghvi and P.D. Cook, American Chemical Society, 1995. $69.95 (viii + 232 pages) ISBN 0 8412 3056 0

One of the major limitations of oligonucleotides as pharmaceutical agents directed at intracellular targets has been their highly charged character. This is of particular concern for implementation of the antisense strategy. A plethora of chemistry has been developed to either mask or replace the phosphodiester backbone of oligonucleotides. In *Carbohydrate Modifications in Antisense Research* the contributing authors present important, creative and sometimes pharmacoeconomic solutions towards making antisense oligonucleotides viable as therapeutics.

This ACS symposium series is extremely well edited and the contributions well written. Each chapter provides important references to key work and may serve as an important resource to medicinal chemists working on oligonucleotides and nucleosides. The text is not inclusive, but highlights from many of the important research areas are discussed. Examples of the topics covered include: dephosphono linkages such as backbone replacements and nonionic oligonucleotides, modification of ribose, branched sugars, hexose derivatives, modification at phosphorous including boron derivatives.

Related *in vitro* data designed to show these oligonucleotide derivatives function by the antisense mechanism are given in few of the chapters. Targets discussed for antisense therapy include HIV, AMV-RT and dsRNA-dependent protein kinase. Most contributions only share their speculation as to the viability of their antisense constructs to show *in vitro* (or more importantly *in vivo*) efficacy. Chapter 12 provides a candid account of the *Advances in automated chemical synthesis of oligoribonucleotides* and purification.

Overall, this book is about the synthetic chemistry of oligonucleotide modification and could be used in a special topics graduate level course. To understand all of the chapters completely requires specialized knowledge. Most of the chapters give an adequate introduction to the topic(s) to be discussed, but in general this is not a book for undergraduates or chemists with no understanding of biology.

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HTS in *Drug Discovery Today*

Biomolecular screening will remain key to lead discovery for years to come. *Drug Discovery Today* welcomes two leaders in the field of high-throughput screening to the Editorial Board – Dr Mark Goldman (Signal Pharmaceuticals, San Diego, CA, USA) and Dr Derek Hook (Bristol-Myers Squibb, Wallingford, CT, USA). These appointments will be important in focusing coverage of HTS in the journal. To mark the commitment of the journal to this area, the July issue will open with an invited commentary: *Ultra high-throughput screening – a journey into NanoLand with Gulliver and Alice* by Derek Hook, and the review section will include the following articles: *Experimental design for HTS* (Mike Lutz, GlaxoWellcome Research Institute, Research Triangle Park, NC, USA) and *SPA: a highly versatile high-throughput screening technology* (Neil Cook, Amersham International, Cardiff Laboratories, UK).

The *Second Annual Conference on Biomolecular Screening* takes place on 14–17 October 1996 in Basel, Switzerland. Session topics will include: screening strategies and logistics, chemical diversity, novel targets, new detection methods and miniaturization, laboratory automation and standardization, products and services, and information management. There will be a special focus session on biomolecular screening in agrochemical discovery. Full details are available from: The Society for Biomolecular Screening, Inc. 36 Tamarack Avenue, Suite 348, Danbury, CT 06811, USA. tel: +1 203 743 1336, fax +1 00 203 748 7557.

Corrigendum

The editorial entitled *Combinatorial chemistry – the way forward* by Dr Nick Terrett, published in the April issue of *Drug Discovery Today*, made reference to a seminal *Nature* paper on the rapid synthesis of peptide libraries by Professor Victor Hruby (Department of Chemistry, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, USA). Although Professor Hruby is a co-author of the paper, the senior author is Professor Kit Lam (Arizona Cancer Center, University of Arizona) and the reference should have read as follows:

2 Lam *et al.* (1991) *Nature* 354, 82–84

We apologize to Professor Lam for this error.