Books

Radioimmunoassay of gut regulatory peptides By Stephen R Bloom and Richard G Long. (Pp. 194; illustrated; £10.50.) London, Philadelphia, Toronto: Saunders, 1982.

This is a short, well written text on radioimmunoassay techniques of gut regulatory peptides emanating from the highly successful laboratories at the Hammersmith Hospital. As radioimmunoassay techniques have formed the basis of much of their productivity it would therefore appear relevant to publish their methodology in such a way that others may be able to follow and practise the technology.

The importance of the book is that the authors discuss aspects concerning methodology which are generally deleted in standard scientific publications. These include the often ignored and apparently frivolous aspects of a method which if incorrectly performed could produce failure or erroneous data. The chapters on 'Measurement in plasma' and 'Assay trouble-shooting' are of particular value in this respect.

The numbers of hormones covered is comprehensive adding up to a total of 13 different peptides. In addition to this there are a number of general chapters on 'Radioimmunoassay', 'Antibodies', 'Radioactive labelling', 'Measurement in plasma', 'Measurement in tissue', 'Quality control and assay mathematics', 'Assay trouble-shooting', and 'Diagnostic plasma radioimmunoassay'. Anyone attempting to establish any of these radioimmunoassays would be advised that this book is compulsory reading. There is considerably more information contained between the covers of this small book on radioimmunoassay of gut hormones than in any other publication available.

It is important, however, that the book should be read with a discriminatory approach. As it is a simple, practical manual a certain amount of detail with respect to other work in this field has been eliminated. The book is parochial, recording the experiences of a single laboratory. It is, therefore, important that the reader should contrast these experiences with his own and with other methods published in the literature. The authors claim that the book is a 'Working guide to the specific techniques we use' and sufficient 'practical details are given to allow anyone acquainted with standard laboratory procedures to start immediately'. The

reviewer considers these claims to be extravagant as in general the text does not give enough experimental details – for example, buffers, pHs, quantities, etc. etc – to allow one to reproduce the method. If all these arguments, however, were allowed to be given sufficient space to be fully aired then the book would lose much of its attractiveness as a short, practical guide to radioimmunoassay technology of gut regulatory peptides.

KEITH BUCHANAN

News

European Gastrointestinal Motility Society

This Society has been formed to promote European research in this field, principally by organising a biennial European Symposium to alternate with the biennial International Symposia. Belgium, England, France, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, and West Germany are represented by members of the Steering Committee; the Secretary is Professor G Vantrappen (Louvain, Belgium).

Gastrointestinal secretion – mechanisms and disorders

The fifth symposium of the series organised by the Royal Postgraduate Medical School in collaboration with the Medical Department of Glaxo Group Research will be held on 19 April 1983. Details from Dr A G Butler, Glaxo Group Research Ltd, Ware, Herts, SG12 0DJ.

8th Gala International Hepatic Update

This gala, to be held at the Royal Free Hospital, London, 14–16 July 1983, includes the following speakers: P D Berk (New York), H O Conn (Yale), R Dick (London), K E F Hobbs (London), G Paumgartner (Munich), H Popper (New York), T B Reynolds (Los Angeles), F Schaffner (New York), P J Scheuer (London), E Schiff (Miami), R Williams (London), A J Zuckerman (London), and staff of the Royal Free Hospital.

Further information can be obtained from Professor Dame Sheila Sherlock, The Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, London NW3 2QG.