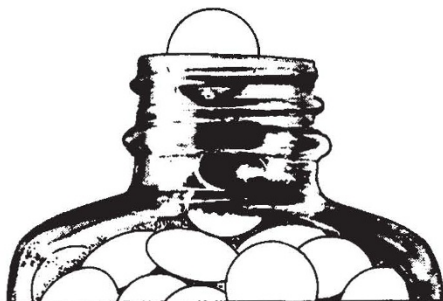


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## REGULATION AND RESTRAINT IN CONTEMPORARY MEDICINE IN THE UK AND USA

Edited by **Dr. Hugh L'Etang**,  
Editor of *The Practitioner*  
December 1982 £32.00 224pp  
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Society of Medicine and  
Macmillan Press Ltd.

Presenting the edited proceedings of an Anglo-American conference, held in October 1981, this book examines in detail the increasing regulatory pressures placed upon medical practice and research both from inside and outside of the profession. These pressures have led to a conflicting array of self-imposed as well as legally imposed constraints, and the contributors discuss here their desirability for both the patient and the profession.

### Contents

The papers are divided into five sessions:

#### Session I

Medicine in a regulated world

#### Session II

Factors which can harm the patient

#### Session III

Regulation and Clinical Trials

#### Session IV

Constraints in General and Consultant Practice

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How much regulation is desirable?

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mentation. They give no indication of an exotic, methane-laden atmosphere: there is a marked decline in enthusiasm for such an atmosphere having ever existed on the Earth. Life started, it seems, under an atmosphere of carbon dioxide, water vapour and nitrogen, with only minor amounts of other constituents. Organic synthesis would still be imaginable, then, in localized regions, but the famous "primordial soup" has become a difficult idea to sustain — particularly since the surface of Mars has so vividly underlined the destructive effects of ultraviolet light.

How on Earth did life start? You will not find an answer to that question in this book; but you will find some of the best evidence available, from front-line exponents, on the geochemical context of biogenesis. And you will find a mind-broadening view of the complexities of the Universe — and an assurance of many surprises ahead. □

*A.G. Cairns-Smith is Senior Lecturer in Chemistry at the University of Glasgow, and author of Genetic Takeover and the Mineral Origins of Life (Cambridge University Press, 1982).*

## Applying colourful antibodies

Brian Anderton

### Immunofluorescence Technology: Selected Theoretical and Clinical Aspects.

Edited by G. Wick, K.N. Traill and  
K. Schauenstein.

*Elsevier Biomedical: 1983. Pp.442.  
Dfl. 140, \$60.*

### Immunocytochemistry: Practical Applications in Pathology and Biology.

Edited by Julia M. Polak and  
Susan Van Noorden.

*John Wright: 1983. Pp.395. £25, \$45.*

A CONSEQUENCE of the competitiveness amongst publishers is the re-working of established topics. These two books are typical examples; although both of them contain new and useful technical information, they include much material which has been adequately covered elsewhere. Indeed, one wonders whether annual practical courses are a suitable basis for such books, as was the case for these two, because of the risk of offending colleagues by omitting their topics since they are not novel.

*Immunofluorescence Technology* begins well with chapters which live up to the promise of the book's title. These include accounts of preparing defined antigenic substrates consisting of antigens coupled to inert matrices, such as agarose beads, and of how they can be exploited for multiple automated microfluorometric assay of appropriate antibodies. Related micromethods for handling multiple immunofluorescent tests of whole cells are covered subsequently, as are methods for detecting specific antigen-binding cells with fluorescent antigen-coated beads in a rosette-like assay. Relatively recent technological innovations, including the application of lasers as the excitatory source and flow cytometry, are also included.

However, it is apparent from the contributions in the second half of the book — concerned with clinical applications — that these new developments have not yet had a great impact in most diagnostic

laboratories. Although these latter chapters are comprehensive reviews of the application of immunofluorescence microscopy for the diagnosis of conditions such as autoimmune and immune complex diseases, nephropathies and demonstration of tumour-associated antigens, they are all documented elsewhere.

The editors of *Immunocytochemistry* have concentrated on the range of techniques for localizing specific antigens in cells and tissues, both at the light and electron microscope levels. As anyone who has tried his or her hand at immunocytochemistry knows, the choice of fixation method, if any, and detection method is very much dictated by the tissue of interest and the antigen and the antibody, to say nothing of the degree of resolution and histological preservation desired. This book covers all of the possibilities, including semi-thin sections, gold labelling and various methods of double-enzyme labelling with monoclonal antibodies, but it is necessary to spend a certain amount of time sorting out the required information, far too much of which is duplicated. Several of the chapters have an appendix on methodology and, for example, as many as half a dozen describe different variations of indirect immunoperoxidase and PAP methods. Furthermore, there is little uniformity in the layout and extent of details in the protocols — this is a pity and it would have been relatively simple to have had a single appendix giving a comprehensive list of agreed methods.

Greater selectivity exercised by the editors would also have been an improvement. For instance it is questionable whether two chapters on raising antibodies is relevant in such a book, since that is an art all of its own.

These two books will be useful reference sources for the more recent technological developments. However more slender and cheaper versions might have encouraged more owners of Sternberger's *Immunocytochemistry* (rightly praised by Polak and Van Noorden in the introduction to their volume) to purchase them as additional practical aids. □

*Brian Anderton is Senior Lecturer in Immunology at St George's Hospital Medical School, London.*