

Book Review

Annual Review of Nutrition (vol. 5), Robert E. Olson, Ernest Beutler and Harry P. Broquist, eds.

Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews, Inc., 1985, 531 pp., bound, \$27.00.

A number of publishers now produce anthologies of review articles in nutritional science. *World Review of Nutrition and Dietetics* (Karger) began the process, joined later by *Advances in Nutritional Research* (Plenum). Annual Reviews, Inc., publisher of perennial anthologies in 24 other fields, has entered the nutrition field with *Annual Review of Nutrition*. As stated by its founding editor, William Darby, it is intended to "serve as a force in identifying the scope of nutrition science and critiquing its progress." In the words of its present editor, it should "represent the cutting edge of science as it advances our knowledge of experimental and clinical nutrition." The present 1985 volume, the fifth in the series, includes 20 chapters ranging from 17 to 30 pages in length, presented in no particular sequence. There is narrow geographic representation, with only two foreign authors — one from Canada, the other from the U.K. — and a full four chapters (20% of the total) are contributed from within the University of California system. There is little projection of themes on Third World issues, with the lone exception being a policy piece on implementing nutritional interventions, erroneously classified as *nutritional anthropology*.

Some of the chapters do justice to the lofty goals of the editors. These include excellent up-to-date contributions on brown adipose tissue and thermogenesis, on nutrition and cancer, on regulation of human energy balance, and on hormonal regulation of food intake, digestion and absorption. Two outstanding contributions on lipid peroxidation — one on chemical mechanisms and tissue consequences, the other on the roles of vitamins E and C as antioxidants — are also worthy of highest recommendation.

At times, however, the selections drift to the extreme of esoterica, as in a chapter on two indolizine alkaloids contaminating animal forages and another on interspecies mass-energy expenditure relationships in a theoretical, mathematical unitary formulation. Chapters on human zinc deficiency and on vitamin B-12-folate relationships have been presented by their respective authors in other publications virtually in the same form. A chapter on nutrition in inflammatory bowel disease ably addresses its subject, while one on celiac disease presents 80% gastroenterology and only 20% nutrition and dietetics.

Chapters are concise, well written and well presented. Bibliographies are generally extensive and current. The price is reasonable. At least one or two offerings should be relevant and informative to everyone in the nutrition field, and several additional chapters will be of reference interest. If it has failings, it is not in the quality of presentation nor in the prestigious nature of the contributors, but in the selection and distribution of themes. Despite its shortcomings, *Annual Review of Nutrition* leads the parade of nutritional anthologies in experimental and clinical nutrition. The series has some improvements to make, however, before it reaches the standards set by its editors.

Reviewed by

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