troduce themselves to recent advances in endocrine physiology and biochemistry, but the breadth and depth of treatment have made them almost impenetrable to the uninitiated. In this book McKerns addresses "beginning students" and others who "wish to learn modern concepts of cellular biochemistry." "The goal has been to present the necessary basic concepts and to develop them in terms of current ideas of regulation and function."

Although some excellent summaries of the action of various hormonal steroids are included, comprehensive review is often sacrificed for the sake of introductory material. Even the presentation of basic material suffers from the inevitable constraints of a small book devoted to a fairly extensive subject. An introductory section on steroid chemistry does not include any useful discussion of the details of steroid nomenclature. A chapter on the 'genetic control of metabolism" works its painstaking way through the primary and secondary structure of nucleic acids, whereas other chapters in which there is discussion of the effects of steroids on enzyme activity contain virtually no discussion of the secondary and tertiary structure of proteins. Discussions of lipid and carbohydrate metabolism, although coherent, are not adequately cross-referenced in the text itself.

Beginners will find this book frustrating because of its peculiar organization and because of a number of omissions and ambiguities. Examples include the statement that the steroid hydroxylase cytochrome P-450 couples to hydroxylases; omission from the discussion of glucocorticoid action of the activation of hepatic glycogen synpyrophosphate-glucose-phosthetase. photransferase, and glucose-6-phosphatase; and the curious statement that "cortisone, unlike cortisol, has little or no suppressive effect on ACTH secretion."

Despite the fact that the book was written at least two years ago, it is generally quite up to date. Not to provide extensive discussion of steroid-protein binding or of the role of protein synthesis in hormonal stimulation of steroid biosynthesis is certainly the author's prerogative. Although this book is not inclusive enough to be a good introduction either to cellular biochemistry or to the general mechanisms of hormone action, it does an excellent job in describing recent advances in intermediary metabolism. The

chapter dealing with gluconeogenesis is a particularly lucid and critical exposition of the roles of uni- and bidirectional enzymes. There is an extensive discussion of lipid metabolism in another chapter which, although not correlated very well with mechanisms of hormone action, is worthwhile for its review of recent literature. A brief summary on the uncertainties of corpus luteum function and the still unknown mechanism of luteolysis is noteworthy, although it is somewhat impaired by a lack of recognition that the effect of prolactin in maintaining corpus luteum function may be restricted to only a few mammalian species.

In conclusion, this book does not appear to be very successfully directed toward McKerns's declared audience. It should, however, be quite useful for endocrinologists wishing to review intermediary metabolism related to hormone action and for those who are interested in teaching these concepts.

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