Non in that particular organ. I found the readable overviews of the known e written by experts in the field and give highly practical and philosophical, about this volume.

The first practical issue is the age of the references. Mostly, these date to 1997 at the latest—a long way from pharmaco logical terms. Many references are a staggering 20 years old, which begs the question: is this a review book or a book of current thinking? This leads to the second problem, which is that the structure of the chapters is inconsistent. Some give a general overview of their subject, whereas others seem to contain experimental data, which do not appear to have been peer reviewed at the time of publication, because the graphs are often unattributed and, with one exception, not referenced to a meeting where they might have been presented. If I am mistaken in this, I apologise. Perhaps the editors could enlighten me.

The philosophical issue is one that has been troubling me for some time; namely, that our understanding of NO is still mainly descriptive. We know what happens if NO metabolism is manipulated pharmacologically, and all the chapters in this book describe such data. Some authors do attempt to put NO into a physiological context, but do not answer the basic questions. Why did NO come to be such an important molecule in evolutionary terms? Why is it ubiquitous? And how is it really interacting in these vascular beds? In short, what is NO really for? And how is it really interacting in these vascular beds? In short, what is NO really for? Having been a young postdoctoral fellow at the time of the original excitement in the 1980s, I cannot help feeling that NO research has blundered into a maze with no clear way to the truth at the centre. My colleagues tell me this is just a midlife crisis. I hope so. In the meantime, this excellent little book will fill a space in the university library, until the truth comes along.

J CLOVER

Nitric Oxide and the Regulation of the Peripheral Circulation. Kadowitz PJ, McNamara DB, eds. (£86.00.) Birkhauser, 2000. ISBN 3 7643 4046 0.

In the first chapter of this book, Louis Ignarro gives an overview of the description of endothelial control of vascular smooth muscle relaxation (endothelium dependent relaxation; EDRF), and the simultaneous elucidation of the mechanism of action of nitrovasodilators (release of nitric oxide (NO) from glyceryl trinitrate). Ignarro and Salvador Moncada showed by diaphoresis that several of the points are duplicated and there is a sense that the chapters are disarticulated. In addition, the book gives only scant mention to equipment purchase and the practical mechanics of setting up a telemedicine system. There is also little attention given to telepathology.

A lack of photographic illustrations aggravates the lack of readability. A smiling health worker on a television screen and a patient having a video assisted ear examination are the only highlights.

In summary, although the book draws together chapters on several established and newer technologies, including comparative genomic hybridisation, the detection of apoptosis, fluorescent in situ hybridisation, the polymerase chain reaction, and laser capture microdissection, among others. As with other titles in this series, each chapter comprises both an introductory text to the techniques and detailed protocols, which are supported by high quality illustrations. Overall, I found this book surprisingly easy to read; not always the case for a methodology based text.

P G MURRAY


At first sight, it might seem that a textbook entitled Renal Cancer: Methods and Protocols might be of limited value only to those not passionate about the study of this cancer type. It is perhaps disappointing then that the title belies a much broader coverage of molecular biology and other approaches to the study of cancer in general; one which should be of considerable value to the scientist or clinician working in any laboratory based study of cancer. In particular, there are excellent chapters on several established and newer technologies, including comparative genomic hybridisation, the detection of apoptosis, fluorescent in situ hybridisation, the polymerase chain reaction, and laser capture microdissection, among others. As with other titles in this series, each chapter comprises both an introductory text to the techniques and detailed protocols, which are supported by high quality illustrations. Overall, I found this book surprisingly easy to read; not always the case for a methodology based text.

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