

Edited by DAVID M. GOLDBERG

# Annual Review of Clinical Biochemistry

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**VOLUME 1**

# Annual Review of Clinical Biochemistry Volume 1

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*Edited by*

**David M. Goldberg, M.D., Ph.D., F.R.I.C., F.R.C.Path.**

Biochemist-in-Chief

Hospital for Sick Children

and

Professor and Chairman

Department of Clinical Biochemistry

University of Toronto

Toronto, Canada

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Volume 1**

# Contributors

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Chester A. Alper, M.D.

Professor of Pediatrics  
Harvard Medical School  
Children's Hospital Medical Center  
Scientific Director  
Center for Blood Research  
Boston, Massachusetts

Peter M.G. Broughton, F.R.C.Path.

Deputy Director  
Wolfson Research Laboratories and Department of Clinical Chemistry  
Queen Elizabeth Hospital  
Birmingham, England

Alvin E. Davis, III, M.D.

Assistant Professor of Pediatrics  
Harvard Medical School  
Children's Hospital Medical Center  
Boston, Massachusetts

Stanley M. Deming, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Chemistry  
University of Houston  
Houston, Texas

Gordon G. Forstner, M.D.

Professor of Pediatrics  
University of Toronto  
Director  
Kinsmen Cystic Fibrosis Research Center  
Hospital for Sick Children  
Toronto, Canada

Arthur R. Henderson, M.B., Ch.B., Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Clinical Biochemistry  
University of Western Ontario  
Director of Clinical Chemistry  
University Hospital  
London, Ontario, Canada

Norman B. Javitt, M.D., Ph.D.

Professor of Medicine and Chief of Gastroenterology  
The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center  
New York, New York

vi Contributors

Donald J.R. Laurence, Ph.D.

Scientific Staff

Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research

London, England

Barry Lewis, M.D., Ph.D.

Professor of Chemical Pathology and Metabolic Disorders

St. Thomas's Hospital Medical School

London, England

Choh H. Li, Ph.D.

Professor of Biochemistry and Experimental Endocrinology

Director of Hormone Research Laboratory

University of California

Berkeley, California

Arne Lundblad, M.D.

Associate Head

Department of Clinical Chemistry

University Hospital

Lund, Sweden

Beverley E.P. Murphy, M.D., Ph.D.

Professor of Medicine and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology

McGill University

Director

Reproductive Physiology Unit

Montreal General Hospital

Montreal, Canada

Alexander M. Neville, M.D., Ph.D.

Professor of Experimental Pathology

University of London

Administrative Director

Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research

London, England

Per-Arne Öckerman, M.D.

Professor and Head

Department of Clinical Chemistry

University Hospital

Lund, Sweden

Harry L. Pardue, Ph.D.

Professor of Chemistry

Purdue University

West Lafayette, Indiana

Charles E. Pippenger, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Neuropharmacology

College of Physicians and Surgeons

Columbia University

New York, New York

Janakiraman Ramachandran, Ph.D.  
Professor of Biochemistry  
University of California  
San Francisco, California

George Steiner, M.D.  
Associate Professor of Medicine and Physiology  
University of Toronto  
Director  
Diabetes Clinic and Lipid Research Clinic  
Toronto General Hospital  
Toronto, Canada

Paul L. Wolf, M.D.  
Professor of Pathology  
University of California  
San Diego, California

Bernard Zinman, M.D.  
Associate Professor of Medicine  
University of Toronto  
Toronto, Canada

# Preface

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Clinical biochemistry is a discipline that has so infiltrated the practice of medicine that its influence is patently at work in most subspecialties, from management of the patient at the bedside to the sophisticated research needed to promote our understanding of human disease. Paradoxically, the "tumor" is in danger of losing its identity to the "host." Many of the major advances that affect the practice of clinical biochemistry are made by investigators who would be regarded, primarily, as clinicians. The laboratory scientist, overwhelmed by demands for his managerial skills, is often only belatedly aware of the advances being made by his clinical colleagues. By the same token, the busy clinician devoted to patient care does not have time to keep pace with developments in the diagnostic laboratory, which must ultimately affect the way in which he investigates his patients; the efficient use of expensive laboratory resources is becoming one of the dominant objectives of our day.

This series seeks to bring together the professional clinical biochemist and the metabolically oriented clinician in an enterprise that will chart the important developments in the subject. It is intended to have wide appeal in the ward as well as in the laboratory. In fact, all the professionals who perform, order, or interpret the tests that make up the diagnostic armamentarium of the chemistry laboratory should profit from the distillation of information contained in its pages.

Because the knowledge needed for a comprehensive understanding of clinical biochemistry is so widely scattered in the scientific and clinical literature, the initial challenge issued to the contributors was to summarize in a critical fashion the important papers in their area over a single calendar year so that, in time, the reader of this series could be told: "Take Annual Review of Clinical Biochemistry, and you will have no further need to read any other periodical in the subject." To facilitate this objective, a roster of contributors has been established on a three-year basis to guarantee continuity and stability, qualities that will certainly be needed to meet this objective.

In fact, the contributors have not universally adopted this approach. Some sought selectivity at the expense of comprehensiveness, and in any event the overall size limitations of the volume imposed constraints that were not compatible with the full realization of the original aim. Nevertheless, it is probably true that no current publication approaches this series in the breadth of its scope which, if not complete, covers most of the areas that clinicians and chemists need to know about in the daily practice of their respective roles. As the series progresses, we hope that a more uniform approach will be



adopted by the contributors leading to closer fulfillment of the objectives that led to its creation.

Initiating a new venture calls for unstinting effort on the part of many people. I have been fortunate with the cooperation received from the publishers, in particular John DeCarville, Maura Fitzgerald, and Marilyn Zirke. Many colleagues, too numerous to name individually, assisted with the proofreading of various chapters. The challenge of preparing the camera-ready copy was undertaken by Marj Fleming with unequalled flair and devotion. However, without the support and tolerance of my wife and two daughters, this publication would never have seen the light of day.

In a venture of this kind, no one, least of all the editor and contributors, stand to make a "profit" in the commercial sense. Our reward will be the satisfaction of performing a service that we deem helpful to our colleagues. In the long run, this can only be achieved by meeting the requirements of those in the field. All comments, however critical, will be warmly welcomed and, hopefully, will serve to orient our future efforts in a direction where they can be of most "profit" to you, the readers.

D.M. Goldberg

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