and well written. Several of them do not seem to be particularly up-to-date in quoting the literature, and indeed the one on membrane junctions appears to be largely confined to the pre-1983 literature from the United States alone. In general it must be said that the references provided do not include the latest work and there are strong reasons to suspect that the articles may have been rather delayed in press. It would certainly help if the reviews contained, in future, a date on them indicating the year of latest publications considered.

When you compare this series of reviews and their price with the recently inaugurated Annual Review of Cell Biology, one has to come to the conclusion that Modern Cell Biology is not a series which provides really good value for money.

Adam Curtis

**Vitamin D, Chemical, Biochemical and Clinical Update**

Edited by A.W. Norman, K. Schafer, H.-G. Grigoleit and D.V. Herrath

*De Gruyter; Berlin, 1985*

xliii + 1248 pages. DM 340.00, $138.00

This book is the publication resulting from the Proceedings of the Sixth Workshop on vitamin D held at Merano, Italy in March 1985. Interest in vitamin D increased at a quite dramatic rate throughout the 1970's following the demonstration in Cambridge and Riverside during the three years from 1968 that vitamin D is simply a precursor of a steroid hormone - 1,25 dihydroxyvitamin D. This finding literally revolutionised our understanding of the regulation of Ca homeostasis and the approach which had to be taken to achieve further progress. This series of vitamin D workshops began in 1973 and grew with the appreciation of the importance of these discoveries for biology and clinical medicine. From the first conference to the present one the number of participants grew from 56 to 474. A feature of these conferences is that all posters presented are published in the Conference Proceedings. Accordingly the position was reached at this meeting whereby there were 0.96 presentations per delegate resulting in a book of 1391 pages costing 340 DM!

The book contains sections on all aspects of vitamin D from chemistry through biochemistry and physiology to clinical medicine. In most topics there are one or more extended papers from invited speakers at the Conference supported by shorter papers from the other participants. The effect is to gather together in one volume a most comprehensive account of research being carried out in 1985 on vitamin D. Despite this enormous research activity it is noticeable that some of the important questions are still unsolved and are receiving little attention. Examples are the molecular events in the conversion of 25-OHD$_3$ to 1,25-(OH)$_2$D$_3$, the physiological effect of 1,25-(OH)$_2$D in the absorption of Ca and the action of vitamin D on bone. The conference spent most time on an aspect not considered before the discovery of 1,25-(OH)$_2$D, namely the hormone's effect on the immune and haematopoietic systems. However, the physiological importance of these effects is unclear. The clinical usefulness of 1,25-(OH)$_2$D in treatment of renal osteodystrophy is now established and the conference reviewed efforts to use the hormone in so far futile attempts to treat osteoporosis. Attendance at the workshop may have been stimulating, but this book is clearly not meant to be read from cover to cover and its main use is as a record of the proceedings.

D.E.M. Lawson
In March 2014, the United States Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) made a proposal to update the Nutrition Facts label and require Vitamin D declaration. Get ahead of this trend by having methods in place using standards and chromatography products from Sigma-Aldrich. Designed to help you locate the chemicals and kits you need, the Bioactive Nutrient Explorer allows you to search for plants containing specific chemicals or demonstrating a specific physiological activity, as well as identify compounds found within a specific plant or chemical structure class. Product #.