

Preface

Most of the volumes in this series are based on a technique or set of related techniques. *Steroid Hormones* invokes virtually the entire range of procedures used in biochemistry and molecular biology as well as endocrinology. Clearly we have had to make quite arbitrary selections, though we hope the increased number of references will at least partly help to compensate for this selective approach. We have, for instance, largely omitted vitamin D derivatives on the (to us) plausible grounds that the active molecules do not retain the full steroid ring structure. In concentrating on hormones of major importance to humans, we have neglected the insect hormones (ecdysone etc.). Even so, it is simply not feasible to describe in detail the application of each procedure to every steroid hormone and thus it will be found that different chapters put the emphasis on different steroids when specific applications are given.

Though united by their interest in steroid hormones, there is a marked divergence in the requirements of those who wish to make, say, a one-off measurement of steroid or receptor levels for a specific experiment and those in clinical laboratories who need to process large numbers of samples over months or years with complete consistency. In deciding upon which techniques to concentrate, we have tried to strike a balance between the methods used in semi-routine clinical investigations and those geared towards basic research.

The pace of progress in this field is such that new methods are rapidly evolving. We have tried to stick to 'tried and true' methods which the contributors know from experience will work reliably; these will form a firm base from which to assess new techniques.

Where appropriate, we have indicated those journals most likely to publish new techniques. We have also given the contact names for advice on some of the methods. We hope that your research will be stimulated by one, or more, of the methods described herein.

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