

BOOK REVIEW

THE CHEMICAL PREVENTION OF CARDIAC NECROSES — By Hans Selye. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1953. 194 pp. \$7.50

The common feature of all the different forms of cardiac necroses is the replacement of cardiac muscle fibers first by inflammatory cells and eventually by scar tissue. Hans Selye has coordinated and integrated in this monograph many isolated clinical and experimental observations on cardiac necroses scattered throughout the literature in the light of newly acquired knowledge about the role played by electrolytes and steroids in cardiopathies. Although this monograph deals mainly with cardiac diseases, Selye points out that treatment with electrolytes and corticoids many times results in lesions in other organs outside the heart such as the skeletal muscles, cerebral edema, hepatic necroses or nephrocalcinosis. Recent observations in the author's laboratory have led to the conclusion that stress, electrolytes and steroids play conditioning roles in the response of the body to normally inoffensive agents resulting in morbid changes. The work in the author's laboratory now under way deals mainly on the chemical production and prevention of cardiac necroses. More than 400 papers in the current literature as well as unpublished observations by the author have been included in the preparation of this monograph. It is hoped that the systematization of our knowledge will bring about a better insight into the complex relationships between electrolytes, steroids and stress which the author believes to be fundamental for the understanding and prevention of many diseases, in the same manner that the concept of the general adaptation syndrome has clarified many riddles in the past. — A.B.M. Sison