The authors have commented as follows:

We thank Dr Houck for his comments on our article. Dr Houck is, of course, correct—artificial colonisation of the newborn with 'non pathogens' has resulted in serious complications. Our paper was not meant to be a review on artificial colonisation and therefore we did not feel obliged to include all references dealing with this subject, including Dr Houck's case report. Similarly, we did not intend to suggest that artificial colonisation is a panacea devoid of complications or that 'one embarks on bacterial interference with 502A staphylococcus'. Rather we offered our observations as a theoretical basis for the effectiveness of artificial colonisation and suggested that the umbilical stump should be considered a possible target site during artificial colonisation programmes in the newborn nursery.

WILLIAM T. SPECK

JOHN M. DRISCOLL

RICHARD A. POLIN

HERBERT S. ROSENKRANZ

Department of Microbiology,

New York Medical College,

Basic Science Building,

Valhalla, New York 10595, USA.

Book reviews

Handbuch der allgemeinen Pathologie. Volume 6, Part 8. 'Transplantation'. Edited by J. W. Masshoff. (Pp. xxiii + 1070; illustrated; \$187.) Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer-Verlag. 1977.

Handbuch der allgemeinen Pathologie is the overall title for a series of some 30 books, each of which deals with some aspect of pathology. The volume being reviewed is concerned exclusively with transplantation and contains 18 chapters all written in English by authors from six countries, including seven from the USA and two from the UK. Eight chapters are devoted to the basic biology of transplantation, and 10 of them to the more applied aspects of the subject, including clinical organ transplantation and the various methods of achieving immuno-suppression.

The opening chapters are beautiful summaries of our knowledge of the major histocompatibility complex, but inevitably since they were written a lot has happened and even some of the terminology has altered. There is a very clear exposition on the phylogeny and ontogeny of transplantation. Humoral and cell-mediated mechanisms of allograft rejection are then discussed, as are the various antigen-induced states of inhibition of the immune response. Later chapters deal with the transplantation of organs, including the kidneys, liver and heart, and various tissues such as bone marrow, skin, cornea, and bone. The modifications of the immune response to grafts brought about by radiation, antilymphocyte serum, and various drugs are fully considered, including the adverse effects these agents may produce. The final chapter is concerned with reactions that the graft may make against the host.

The main disadvantages of this book are, firstly, its sheer size (it weighs 6 lb), secondly, that there is some unnecessary duplication of information while certain aspects of the vast subject of transplantation are incompletely covered, and thirdly, the evident delays in publication with the result that not many chapters have more than a few references dated as recently as 1975.

However, this book is well produced and well illustrated with black-and-white figures and is an important source of references for those concerned with tissue and organ transplantation. Most of the

contributors are acknowledged leaders in their respective areas and deal with their subjects in an informative and interesting way; some are outstanding. For these reasons medical libraries should possess a copy. For the individual, even a transplantation enthusiast, the price will probably be prohibitive. K. A. PORTER

Major Problems in Internal Medicine. Volume XIV. 'The Eosinophil'. By Paul B. Beeson and David A. Bass. (Pp. xii + 269; illustrated; £10.50.) Philadelphia, London, Toronto: W. B. Saunders. 1977.

The eosinophil has fascinated but puzzled scientists for years. This is reflected in the vast literature on the subject. Recently, a few chinks of light have appeared, which suggest some of the functional roles this cell may play. Beeson and Bass are both eosinophil experts and have digested the massive literature thoroughly, sorting the wood from the trees. In normal circumstances a monograph on such a specialised subject might be considered to be of interest to only a minority of readers of the *Journal of Clinical Pathology*. However, the text is so well written that it is a delightful book to read. Any pathologist who comes up against the eosinophil from time to time and who wishes to flex his intellectual muscles painlessly should try to get hold of a copy.

I. C. M. MACLENNAN

Current Chemotherapy, Volumes I and II. Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Chemotherapy. Edited by W. Siegenthaler and R. Lüthy. (Pp. xxiv + 1361; \$75 for the two-volume set.) Washington: American Society for Microbiology. 1978.

Few would dispute that the chief value of international meetings lies in the informal contacts and discussions that take place outside the auditoria. The value of publishing conference proceedings is often less clear, but whatever the reason, the end result is usually rather unsatisfactory: a deluge of data packed into short, enigmatic abstracts or rambling, untidy reports of work which will be published again elsewhere.

The supposed object of congresses and their published proceedings, of course, is to provide a multivoiced statement of the global 'state of play' in a particular field of endeavour. Viewed in this optimistic way, the Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Chemotherapy ranks