

Letters to the Editor

ACP Broadsheet 80

This Broadsheet, sent to members of the Association with the October 1973 issue of the Journal, is a useful review of techniques for estimating bacteria and white cells in urine. It is also a remarkable piece of chauvinism. Twenty-one of the 23 references are to British papers, the two exceptions being papers about estimating urinary glucose. Fundamental American contributions to our understanding of urinary tract infection, notably those of E. H. Kass and his colleagues, are extensively used in the Broadsheet but their origins are not acknowledged. The eye-catching and all-important fig 1 is clearly based on Kass's work—indeed, I saw him draw a closely similar graph on a blackboard as far back as 1959. The first paragraph on page 10 clearly implies that 'significant bacteriuria . . . without increased pus cell excretion' was first described in 1963 and 1964 by British writers, including two of the authors of the Broadsheet; yet Kass had written on this subject well before that time. Admittedly such a Broadsheet cannot be expected to give a comprehensive reference list for the subject, but even so I think that our Association now owes Dr Kass and his compatriots an apology.

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References

- Kass, E. H. (1955). Chemotherapeutic and antibiotic drugs in the management of infections of the urinary tract. *Amer. J. Med.*, **18**, 764-781.
Kass, E. H. (1956). Asymptomatic infections of the urinary tract. *Trans. Amer. Physons*, **69**, 56-64.
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ACP Broadsheet 80: The Reply

Thank you for sending us a copy of Dr Turk's letter about ACP Broadsheet 80, which we wrote.

The letter partly answers its own objections. As we understand it, a Broadsheet is not intended to include a comprehensive review of the under-

standing of the subject. Indeed, when the authors have published reviews on urinary tract infection elsewhere, full acknowledgement of the important studies of Kass and other Americans has, of course, been made^{1,2}. For example, the 'all important' figure 1 of the Broadsheet was previously published by us when referring to Kass's work and as a diagrammatic representation of his findings, although, unlike Dr Turk, we had not had the pleasure of seeing Dr Kass draw it on a blackboard.

A Broadsheet does, however, review technical methods and we tried to ensure that proper acknowledgement was made for these. The technical developments mentioned were not, in fact, first described by Americans. Therefore, although this was not our purpose, perhaps a touch of jingoism might even be justified in this context. We suggest that for anyone more familiar with the literature since 1957 or who had taken the trouble to check at least some of the references in the Broadsheet, these comments would be unnecessary. Also, we wonder whether the New Zealand and Australian authors in our reference list will take kindly to being regarded as British or will the Association be asked to apologise yet again?

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References

- Brumfitt, W., and Percival, A. (1964). Pathogenesis and laboratory diagnosis of non-tuberculous urinary tract infection. *J. clin. Path.*, **17**, 482-489 (see p 486).
Brumfitt, W. (1972). In *Renal Disease*, 3rd ed., edited by D. A. K. Black, pp. 367-397. Blackwell, Oxford.

Incidence and Isolation of Bacteroides Species from Clinical Material and their Sensitivity to Antibiotics

Under 'material and methods' I referred to the use of Robertson's cooked meat broth. This should have been cooked meat medium (Oxoid) which is a modification of Robertson medium. It has been the custom in this laboratory for many years to add one tablet (Oxoid CM82) to 10 ml distilled water in a Universal container, sealed by a metal screw

Book reviews

International Histological Classification of Tumours No. 8 Cytology of the Female Genital Tract By G. Riotton and W. M. Christopherson in collaboration with R. Lunt. (Pp. 41; 191 colour plates. Book only: £6.50; Book + 152 colour transparencies: £19.00.) Geneva: World Health Organization. 1973. Available through HMSO, London.

This book is number 8 in the series on International Classification of Tumours, published by the World Health Organization. It was compiled by Riotton and Christopherson and 12 eminent cytologists of 10 different countries, with a view to standardizing cytological nomenclature for international use. Not surprisingly, agreement between the participants appeared difficult to achieve, and the book is finally published as a preliminary classification and contains an invitation for criticisms and helpful suggestions.

Although the series is mainly concerned with the classification of tumours, the present volume also includes commonly used terms in non-malignant clinical cytology of the female genital tract, as well as recommended techniques for cell collection and fixation. Tumour classification (written in four languages) comprises cervical and endometrial malignancies, Mullerian mixed tumours, and trophoblastic and extrauterine malignant neoplasms. Explanatory notes (in English only) describing the cells derived from these lesions are concise and dogmatic and in certain instances controversial. The same applies to the descriptions given to the normal and inflammatory aspects of gynaecological cytology.

However much one may disagree with the text, nobody could possibly find fault

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cap with a rubber liner, or with a polypropylene cap (Sterilin). After normal sterilization the bottles are stored at room temperature and inoculated without any further treatment. I note that this method differs from the directions given in the Oxoid manual (third edition, 1971). It is possible that the use of screw caps maintains anaerobic conditions more efficiently than do conventionally plugged tubes.

ARTHUR A. B. MITCHELL

with the accompanying 195 superb colour photomicrographs covering most of the normal and abnormal aspects of cervical cytology and its histological bases. The choice of the illustrations, the standard of photography, and the attention to detail are admirable, and for that reason the book should be acquired and consulted by every cytological centre and all histological laboratories engaged in gynaecological pathology.

E. WACHTEL

The Pathology of the Heart By E. G. J. Olsen. (Pp. 240; illustrated. \$22.50.) New York: Intercontinental Medical Book Corporation. 1973.

Dr Olsen's book avowedly sets out to fill the gap between the very detailed books on cardiac pathology and the necessarily relatively short chapters in standard textbooks. He succeeds in his aims admirably. A prominent feature is the very clear way in which the topics are laid out with headings and sub-headings which make the book ideal for anyone wanting a rapid and balanced survey of the subject. Each of the 20 chapters has between 30 and 60 well chosen references and the illustrations, although perhaps in places a little murky, excellently complement the text. The author's hopes that it will be of value to candidates for postgraduate examinations should be more than justified. It will also be excellent for preparing lectures on special pathology, and it is the sort of book that university teachers secretly hope their students will not discover.

Factually one can criticize little. However, as so often happens with specialist textbooks, when it gives a summary of a general disease affecting the system in question it leaves a little to be desired. For example, the section on amyloidosis manages to get away without mentioning the words 'light chains' or even 'immunoglobulins', omissions that may well be a relief to non-chemically orientated morbid anatomists but potentially misleading to students.

A. C. HUNT

Tumours of the Esophagus and Stomach (Atlas of Tumour Pathology, Fascicle, Second Series) By Si-Chun Ming. (Pp. 279; 251 figures. No price given.) Washington: Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. 1973.

All professional surgical pathologists keep up to date their personal set of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology Atlas of Tumour Pathology, though the work is largely unknown to surgeons, more's the pity. Though the Editor denies the intention of 'a second edition of the first Atlas', in fact this volume will supersede the combined fascicles 20 and 21 of the old series, and we shall miss the approach and style of Stout and Lattes. Fresh information abounds. There is a welcome amplification in the section on conditions associated with malignant epithelial tumours of the oesophagus, but a confusing account of carcinosarcoma and pseudosarcoma. We look to a work of this significance for guidance and considered opinion in difficult areas. On the stomach, the section on benign polyps is expanded, but I doubt whether any reader of this book would approve of the no less than seven illustrations of signet ring cell carcinoma. The space released by sacrificing six of them, with other otiose illustrations, would have been better devoted to problems in the interpretation of gastric biopsies. I am a little concerned that the practical aspects of diagnosis, stressed in say Rappaport's fascicle on the haemopoetic system or in the first edition of the fascicle on the central nervous system by Kernohan and Sayle, may be giving way to mere encyclopaedic information, and that this invaluable series may pass by degrees from the bench to the coffee table.

ARNOLD LEVENE

The Kidney An Outline of Normal and Abnormal Structure and Function, 4th ed. By H. E. de Wardener. (Pp. viii + 432; illustrated. £5.00.) Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone. 1973.

This is the fourth edition of this monograph since its first appearance 15 years ago, clear testimony of its popularity. It is, indeed, a considerable achievement for one man to write a comprehensive account of the normal and abnormal structure and function of the kidney. It is probable that no one could be equally successful in all aspects of this considerable task although Professor de Wardener comes near to that goal.

The account of the physiology of the kidney is clear and straightforward. There is a good account of the immunological mechanisms of renal disease. The

clinical manifestations of the various forms of renal disease, their diagnosis and treatment, are also well presented as are the functional disorders in disease.

The accounts of the normal and abnormal structure are, however, disappointing and in some respects incorrect. Nowadays there is really no good reason, other than economy, for illustrating structural changes by line drawings rather than electron micrographs or photomicrographs. With modern techniques they should be as clear or clearer than line drawings. Unfortunately several of the line drawings in this book contain errors of fact as do the written accounts. The glomerular basement membrane is 3000 to 5000 Å thick not 800 Å. The description of the blood supply of the juxtamedullary glomeruli and the medulla is incorrect. Virtually the entire blood supply to the medulla is postglomerular.

The book is an excellent summary of the clinical and functional aspects of renal disease but as an account of the structural aspects it cannot be recommended.

D. B. BREWER

IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risk of Chemicals to Man Volume 2 Some Inorganic and Organometallic Compounds. (Pp. 181. £1.50.) Lyon: International Agency for Research on Cancer. 1973. Distributed for the IARC by the World Health Organization, Geneva. Available through HMSO, London.

The contents of this small paperback volume are based on the findings of two recent International Agency for Research on Cancer working groups. The substances considered are asbestos, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, nickel, tetra-ethyl and tetra-methyl lead, and iron-carbohydrate complexes. For each, a detailed survey is presented: chemical and physical data, the uses and occurrence of the various materials, biological data on carcinogenicity tests, and human observations (mainly epidemiological). Kept commendably separate, in each case, is a section of comments and evaluation. There are full bibliographies. The contemporary concern with industrial and environmental pollutants means that clinical pathologists are likely to be increasingly confronted with problems relating to the carcinogenic risks of some of the compounds discussed here—particu-



International Histological Classification of Tumours No. 8 Cytology of the Female Genital Tract

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